NEW
SHORT STORIES

BY

BOB ALLISAT

COPYRIGHT

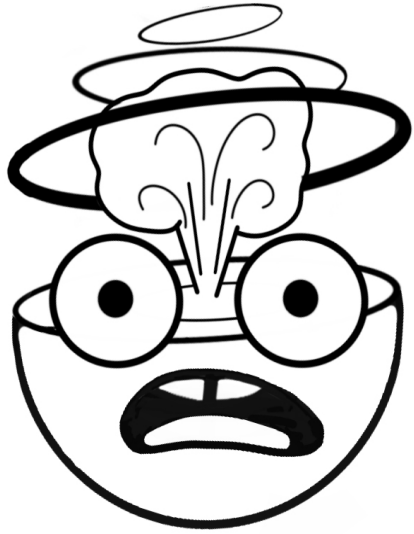
FOR PERSONAL USE ONLY - REPUBLISHING, INSTITUTIONAL OR COMMERCIAL USE PROHIBITED
ALL OTHER RIGHTS RESERVED

1996 2024

©

TOC

1 Title + Copyright
2 TABLE OF CONTENTS
3 In The Year 2024
4 Manray
5 Black Helicopter
6 Inundation Trilogy 1. Release
11 Inundation Trilogy 2. Conquest
15 Inundation Trilogy 3. Terminal
19 The Nameless Adventures of
21 Liddle Pudding Baby Head Space
23 A Very Difficult to read Scifi-hippy Morality Play
26 In the Year 2025
27 an incomplete scifi sex story set on another planet of amazons (without the benefit of punctuation or capitalization) [FUCK!]
34 Dr. Evil
37 Fool
37 She's
38 Coastal
38 Lines
38 ALL CAPS
39 7
39 Did You Dig? Can You Groove?
40 Cheetah Three
40 Black Shoe
41 Black Dog
43 Waiting Room
44 What The Children See
45 Fish, Cat, Dog, Bird, Girl
71 Rocket
72 John Johnson
74 Dr. Hook
74 Fax Man
75 Miserable Schreiber
77 Getting To Know UU
82 Consultant Dick
87 Jester!
88 Monkey Man
89 Lost
95 Graff Saintz
96 Don't Mess With Little Miss Sunshine
99 Park Dome
102 Night of the Chupacabra
107 On Spontaneous Human Combustion
110 And gently flows the Don Valley Expressway
113 About



IN THE YEAR 2024

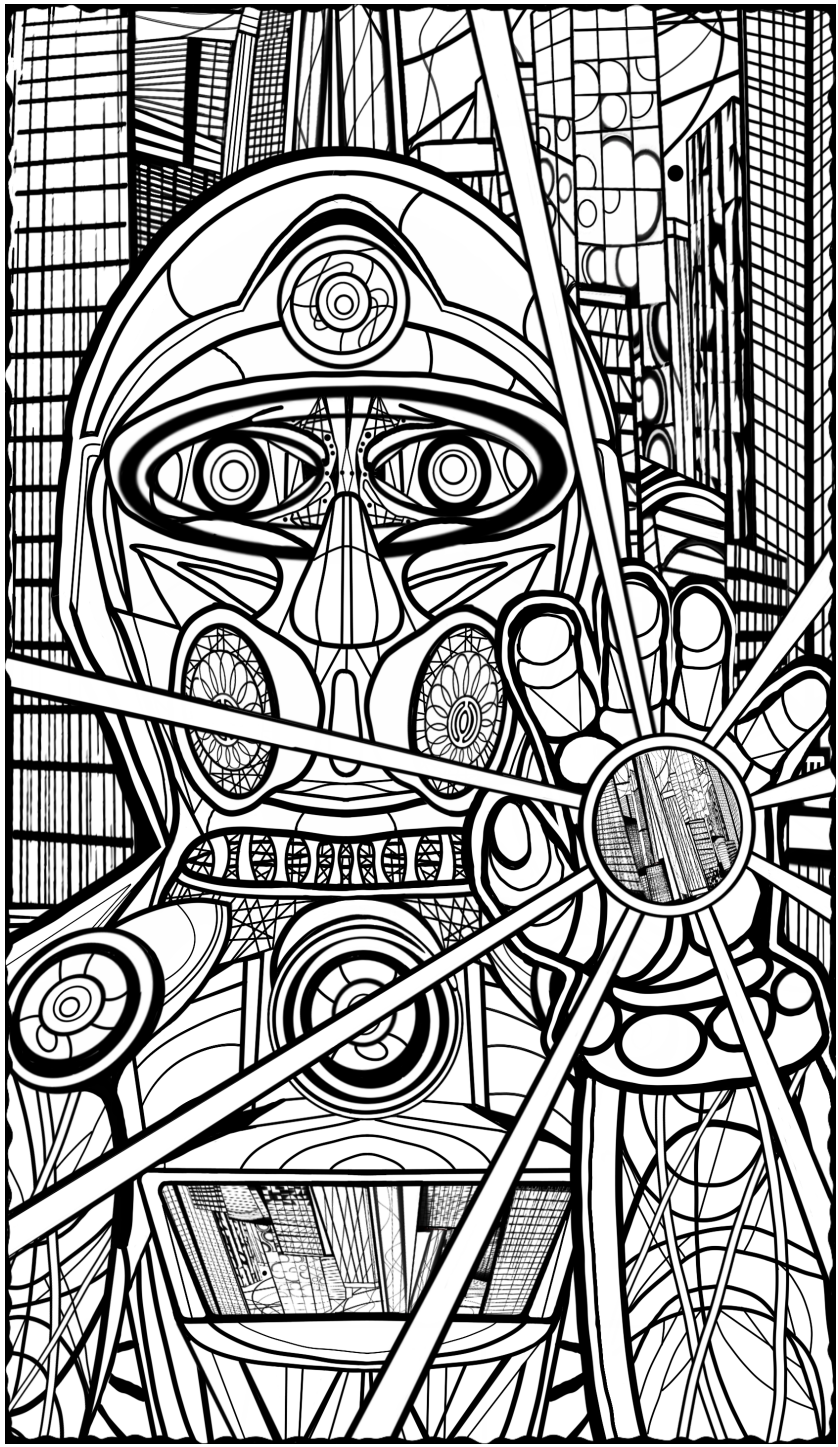
In the year 2024 there is no black and white, no true and no false. No. What is is what is left. Some sort of smouldering ash. A remnant of what was. Was expected. Was anticipated. As the bright, everything's getting better, always better futurist's future. Only it isn't. Is not. Cannot be.

For even the futurists have run for the hills. Escaped to dystopic nether-worlds. Content to spawn Hollywood script after Hollywood script of the nightmare come true. Zombie this. Vampire that. Last whatever on Earth. Wars to end all wars. The aftermath. Escape to space, Moon, Mars, Enceladus, somewhere, nowhere. This is a time of nothings. A time of zeros. Rounding down to.

And yet. There is hope. This is the planet of hope. The children of hope. That is who we are. Where we all start. The beginnings of us all. And yet there is hope. The one thing among many that we can count on. Stupid. Easily dismissed. Even more easy to lose. And find. In the deepest, darkest and most perilous of places. Hope.

Hope in what the children see. In what the children know. Hope.

MANRAY



BLACK HELICOPTER

"They're not helicopters Bob. We only shape 'em that way. Rotors? Noise makers - for the kids." Kids = public. "They fold away. The rest - more fun and games. The louder the better. Hell we fly 'em low for kicks." Jim smiles a gung ho smile. “But they are black – black as hell!”

Me and Jake went to Psy-OpS together – psychological operations school. Lots of laughs. Right away you could see who was cut out for it. And who wasn’t. Jake and me and a few others had a blast through all the shit meant to break down wannabes. Laying flat in the grass in a cold as fuck two in the morning rain. Trying not to laugh as some dickhead drill sergeant fired live rounds trying to mow same grass. Isn't everybody's idea of fun. Like SEALS only times X.

I went on to PsyOSP-5 - don't ask – for five years. Jake went Super Secret Some Shit (4S - won't ask) and stayed there. We were both cleared - still are. Only he was Super clear. Meaning probably dead presidents don't know what the fuck Jim does. Hell, Jake didn't even know what Jake knew. Puzzle. Pieces. Keep enough off the table, no one the fuck knows.
Until it's done. Then - if there's a Prez to tell - tell him. If it’s never done no-one will ever know. That's the kind of funny I like.

"How Fast Jake?"

"Classified." Trans: super fast.

"How high?"

"Way classified." *Really* high. Space?

"The Engine?"

"No clue Bro." Probably boxed off. So no-one ever saw anything associated with it except for boxes, also black. Big one, little ones. Sheathed wires, cables and exhausts, out vents,intakes, more. Real and fake. In, out, around. So who the fuck knows. Seen that sort of shielding before on all sorts of gadgets, vehicles, instruments. Cool.

"What's not classified Bro?"

"What I've told you."

"What's the name?"

"Black Helicopter."

"Why Black?"

"Classified."

"Why Helicopter?" See: funny.

INUNDATION TRILOGY
1. Release

A hundred thousand fronds of undergrowth fern sway in motion under a gentle rain. Some fully unfolded, some still curled tight and all states in between. A deep green interspersed with broad black vertical columns as far as the eye could see.

It had stopped raining up in the canopy. Under redwood darkness the rain continued unabated. Sun burned up there but it was cool and humid on the ground fifty meters down. The millennium trees thundered up bridging dark earth to the thick above and clear beyond. One could only imagine what the sky looked like.

Greve had taken to walking for hours on the trails since he purchased the park from the state of Oregon. His footsteps swallowed by the thick accumulation of ten thousand years of boughs, needles, cone, flesh, life and bones. Sometimes he would sleep on the fragrant carpet and dream what would happen.

A tone from his jacket pocket. It was Bertrand paging him. Touching the screen another tone. His itinerary. He was already late for ten. They would just have to wait... but then it was on his time, his money. So they could wait until the sun went down. Cancel eleven, twelve and juggle the afternoon. All except for Western White House at three. One person you couldn't keep waiting. If only because they wouldn't be there.

Walking towards the house lost in the forest he could already hear the jet copter's twin engines idling. Screaming was the better way to describe what ears heard.

Bertrand, standing in the blast, head lowered, opened the door. The expression of impatience that never left her face mixed with fear of the machine's blades ripping the air a meter over her head.

"Good morning Hans." She tried to smile.

"Good morning Sarah." the door slams behind them and suddenly the terrific noise stops. Greve fully understood how his engineers had managed to silence all that power. But he couldn't help being amazed every time the silence clamped down. "What's new?"

"All good news. Some bad. They've prepared a visdoc. It's on your screen. Reports from Europe and Africa. Nothing this hour from Asia or Aussie."

"Get on it. Could you reach Siemans?"

"No."

" - and tell Roger Ramjet up there not to goddamn break my neck today. If he tries any more shit like yesterday tell him that the next thing he'll be flying around is his CV."

"Okay. But you know he was trying -"

"He should have planned our route better." Greve shut the door to his cabin. Yesterday, over SanFran, his pilot had dodged ground fire. Sent everyone upside down shaking a vintage sidewinder off. It was not the first time this had happened.

There on the display the company colours and logo turned one into the other and back again every few seconds. Visdoc - Greve's term everybody used - was like the news only just about the company's holdings and interests. It was the news. Reports and video. Interviews with several candidates for various positions. Political and economic forecasts and problems.

Messages and requests in writing and on clips. Prepared by all the "alert" offices before Greve awoke. Awaiting all the "idle" offices when they came to life. A continuous circle.

You see Greve knew not to keep his staff on twenty four hours. He just spread them across the globe so it appeared that way. A significant player awake, accessible. observant, any time, all year. Muslims, Jews, Sikhs, Wika - anything but Christians Greve joked - were there. Sent or found, posted or parachuted but there. A continuous chain of presence better than all governments had. And Greve slept eight hours in twenty four. His edge over the competition - he dreamt.

An interesting side bar prompted an encrypted blast across the globe. Someone, tomorrow, would wake up and find lightening had struck. From The Man himself. No need to wake anyone. Sleep ... dreams .. his edge. Positions filled, comments on policy, directions, instructions ... business completed at least for the moment.

Evidently Pilot had plotted the course to Los Angeles out over the water. It wasn't pretty but easier than an uninvited job search. And no matter how Greve detested the sight and odour it was safe and they were able to go above the tortoise pace sound barrier. The ocean below a lifeless brown plane, littered with garbage stinking even through the skein that bathed the interior of the 'copter in pure air. Feeling the machine do the banking turn towards the continent and the interior Greve wondered how long it would be that he would have to bear the unpleasantness of air travel. And Earth.

At the pad in a dense ring of conifers no-one awaited them. Greve detested welcoming committees and on his own turf had banned them a decade ago. "I don't pay anyone to shake hands or pat backs." was the direct quote. The walk to the gigantic research facility - underground - was extremely pleasant. Unless you paid very close attention the forty meters seemed level. But over it's length you went forty meters deeper into the ground, to were a large set of chrome doors were set into bedrock.

Another thing you would have had to look for to see was the small door that Greve and Bertrand entered through. It's seam was almost invisible in the greater expanse of door. It was hinged internally and swung open as if suddenly a piece of the solid wall had broken off. Of course only after the appropriate cards, codes and etc had been entered in a small also extremely discrete pass station.

Another thing Greve didn't believe in was the dogs and gorillas concept of security. His idea of safety was a little more sophisticated. And since his company was one of the few that had never lost a single employee or, more importantly, working day to the terrorists it was also successful.

Inside there was one fellow at a terminal which - you couldn't see it from the visitors angle - displayed every step you had taken, pictures of each and every person anywhere near the grounds with accompanying information (or lack thereof), the entire flight path of the aircraft, a record of every word you spoke and ... if the terminal operator desired, every word spoken within three kilometres of the grounds during the last year. And that as not all.

There was no way, no other way in except by permission. And the man at the console logged in to passcode the two people whom he had seem perhaps a hundred times. Weight, height, dimensions, hand and voice print, entry code correlations (for every time in and out there was a new algorithm generated and responded to) all let the next door within a door open.

This time the door opening revealed a great freight elevator and another small passage both carved out of deep stone. The passage the man and woman walked down led to an elevator at the end. An underground stream burst out of one wall flowing under a little bridge into a deep pool which had been excavated to contain and direct the waters further down. The water sounds filled the sweet air and took the mind entirely off of the controlled plummet down x hundred meters to where the laboratory lay.

The lab could have held an old 747 aircraft. If you could have folded the wings to get it onto the freight elevator. It was a natural cavern that Greve's people had discovered by chance on this otherwise inopportune piece of terrestry. And Greve had always had it in the back of his mind. The mesomorphic floor was remarkably level ... and the vault gothic in height and

general structure.

On that floor there was only a cluster of very technological looking equipment. The centre of which was bathed in a clean blue tinged light very near to that of daylight. In fact it was daylight processed down the now hundreds of meters to where they were. There were four other people sitting in a loose grouping around a table on which various displays reeled off what was evidently the underlying code for some program or other.

They were watching the screens so intently that only one of them - a tall ugly man with blond hair - noticed them.

"Hello Hans. Hello Sarah."

"Hello Ron. Everything ready?"

"Almost. Glad you're a little late though. Gave us a chance to run over this little bit again. It's been giving us a lot of problems. And it all boiled down to ... you see that highlighted string that just went by?"

"No."

"Well we had it down twice. So we turned it on and then off again so the whole shebang stopped."

"It's ready then. I mean this is pretty late in the day ..."

"It's ready."

"Then do it."

"Jim?" Jim was another tall fellow only he was bald mostly. And older. And not quite as unpleasant to look at. Greve had another thought-come-policy about faces and bodies and attractiveness. Jim, Ron, Wayne and Hua (the one woman who also worked down there) where living examples.

"Ready Wayne?" Wayne looked up blinking at the new people in their little big world.

"Oh! Hello ..." and Hua, showing signs of discomfort, also greeted Greve and Bertrand. She was very easily upset and Greve never spoke to her directly. Preferring to let Bertrand communicate for him.

"Yes. We're ready." And Wayne, the project leader, with a few entries reset all the machines. The screens all went to the same initial display. Hua started the mark count, Jim, who had somehow gone off returned towing a large dolly on which was a covered object, evidently round, but flat. A loz-

enge might be the pharmaceutical description.

He and Ron, who had also somehow made his way there, lifted the cover off gently revealing what looked like a balloon. Transparent with equipment on the inside some of which was pink flesh coloured most of which was concealed by a dense array of wire and wire tape, copper and chrome coloured cord of some kind and flat triangular and square chips of all colours.

"Looks like a shrimp-blimp doesn't it" Hua made the boys laugh and Bertrand smile at their school yard sense of humour. Greve was too wound up to hear the stupid joke. His thoughts where not so much on the machine as on the future this machine would bring.

At eleven thirty one nine eleven old Pacific Standard Time on April 13, in the terrestrial year 2003. In the vicinity of a place once called Plinth, California, United States of America, Earth. A vessel attained a prolonged and controlled flight lasting exactly twelve minutes. This vessel used gravitational propulsion without connection to external devices or physical supports to attain and control it's movements.

It successfully circumnavigated the experimental chamber at one hundred and sixty kilometre per hour, then executed various slow speed manoeuvres and returned to its original position. The trial was repeated three times until the prototype vessel collided with one of the walls of the chamber at speed and disintegrated.

INUNDATION TRILOGY

2. Conquest

It was hours since light of the event radiated out past where the vessel waited. As predicted most of the atmosphere of the planet was carried with the blast so the sound came over the vessel like a hurricane. A DGC pushed the debris away from the skin thin shell and only the sounds of destruction impacted. Sounds mollified, modulated but none-the-less there so great was the impact of destruction.

No-one stopped. Not a head diverted from task ranges, no-one moved to the Simports from stations of rest. They were all safe and who could say when the next attack would come. G's from a distant star engaged, vessel 8-2 ellipsed as velocity increased... of course no-one felt the uptake, the sleeping slept.

Strategy was not complicated for the crews of these Hunters. Destroy. Destroy all opponents. Or be destroyed. That was why the planet of some sixteen billion creatures was taken. It made it easier - to call them creatures down there. They could not really be described as living much of a life anyways.

Each and everyone identical in ... composition would be the appropriate word. Not quite alive in that they moved about a centimetre in one of their ... again words fail .. times. How long they lived , what the functioning of their "society" was, how they ever developed interstellar
capacities and how such lethargic creatures operated their primitive vehicles would never be known... not that it mattered. They had been responsible for tens of millions of human deaths on several development platforms in the days before The War. When we didn't even know of their existence. The devastation came swift then. Unknown. It was presumed to be various and assorted catastrophic accidents until one of their spacecraft malfunctioned and actually crashed into one of the platforms. This mistake alone was responsible for all the events of the last twenty cycles.

The shock when first we discovered these first explicit signs of some sort of outside force ... the root cause of so many inexplicable disasters occurring in the galactic development
program ... was palpable. Men and women remember where they were by the data space these creatures accidentally entered our consciousness. They died turning into pools of sulphurous muck when exposed to something or other .. later we found out they were sensitive
to our light. Still later we found out there were hundreds of different varieties of these things.

For some reason or other they were attacking and killing us humans who had finally broken from our tiny solar system. We were steadily expanding

far beyond what had been imaginable even a few terrestrial generations ago.

The enormous problem of time alteration during supra-light travel had been solved simply ... since the planet no longer could sustain life all of the remaining humanity simply travelled the same velocity ... even if they only went around and around and around their historic sun. An extremely simple solution. Put everybody in the same boat so to speak and it didn't matter what happened to time. Whereas the doomsdayers and old environmentalists had predicted the extinction of humanity what instead was happening was an unexpected explosion in population now that the artificial limitations of Earth had been surpassed.

All that was between humanity and the infinite reaches of the galaxy and beyond where these monsters and freakish humanoids and ghoulish creatures of all weird shapes and sizes. Eternal life and peace lay in defeating these primitives who had set their brutal instincts on extinguishing the human flame from the universe ...

Kriege caught himself. He was usually very conscious when repeating the data scripts. He thought to himself - sleep tales away. Sleep. Tired he scribed something onto the pallet mindlessly ...

Kriege wiped the offending script from his disconnected palette before merging it with the main control stream. Such thoughts may still be permitted. But to encapsulate them would be an instant decommission. And though it was painless he never the less desired to prolong

> But The War . . . I am tired of it . I know death is happening somewhere as a result of my activities. Destruction so far away that sometimes we never even see the outcome so remote are we from the site. The War never seems to end. There are always new enemies... I can't count the number of unseen worlds I have witnessed being obliterated. We are not even allowed to view the various results of data probes, the images of life and lives so strange it is said that those who work there - those few who are unable to communicate with anyone on the vessel - are prone to suicide and breakdown at several magnitudes the average rate. Why? Maybe they are not all monsters?

his existence If only to see his children again. And even that was not guaranteed the rate the hunters increasingly were being decommissioned by the creatures.

Kriege waited for uptake. The coursing flow of information lit up his palette with a thousand consolidated Event Paths ... complex gravitational and other energic forces represented in various symbols and formula represent-

ations. His task simply to monitor and alter EPs for introduced irregularities. It was a task he enjoyed. The understanding of all that transpired brought a sense of satisfaction to him that nothing else seemed to match here.

Simply knowing what so few could even see was enough. And detecting an aberration, the subsequent intervention and re-establishment of flow was exciting. Well it was more interesting than the endless scanning of crystalline structures searching for faults he remembered from his studies. Somehow that was to have prepared him for this.

Absurd idea really ... it was dropped soon after he finished. But that time was lost and all it left him was a propensity to lapse into thought when he was supposed to be on duty. Until his eye detected a slight irregularity and the fear of the consequences of failure gripped his bowels, spreading into his intestines like a wave. It was all right this time. Just some natural distortions and reflections. Nothing alien.

The last sequence of events resulted in the flow resuming its flawless course. Any remaining interference posts must have been rendered dysfunctional by the disruption of planetary activities. He knew - no others knew - that it would be some time before they would manoeuvrer into range of other targets. So he disengaged from the stream signalling the others hidden away at their posts and made his way to his cell.

Kriege was bred when The War began and had spent his entire existence in The Service. He posted with Helen in a cell towards a court that had a water fountain, one of only two in the entire vessel. Off duty pairs would come here when the light cycle was down. And the stars would illumine the interior through the Pattena. It was a good locaton though in no other ways different from the other cells. Helen was not there. She must have duty. One cell was alike all the others. If not for the marking it would be hard to navigate to any location. Not that it was unpleasant. It was a very pleasant environment. Clothes were necessary only by fashion and long since shoeware had been discarded aboard as an absurd terrestry. The food and cycles were the same, all alike. This was not a regular resident vessel but a defence vessel. And all this was the way it should be. Utility and uniformity - efficiency and survival.

He locked the door and turned off the illumination. If only to preserve the illusions of privacy aboard such a monitered habitat these conventions were preserved. And disrobing, Kriege wondered again about the thoughts he had been having about it all.

His father had spoken of history in those few meetings during which they had been permited to be alone. Words of strangeness merged and the thoughts returned. This time with another tonality. As to their absurdity in

light of the prospect of the extermination of all humanity at the hands of these creatures who seemed to be everywhere against the human civilization.

Kriege knew - by accident if that was possible - perhaps it was an advertant accident - that the alien lifeforms were indeed in league. Having some years ago come across a terraform transcription of an intercepted transmission stream. It was intelligence concerning an accord among several hundred systems nearest to Solar. And the substance of the stream was concerning a joint strategy for eliminating the offending principles - Humanity.

It would be time to go back to his post in several hours. And till then he decided simply to lie there in the darkness. And try to remember where in the little terrestrial history he remembered the parrallel to all this was.

Kriege sometimes dreamt that The War was over. But unlike the scenarios so vividly illustrated in all the media of human victory images of tens of millions of dead men and women coursed through his mind ... He awoke that sleep period once again screaming with these death visions alive in the darkness even as he tried to compose himself for duty.

INUNDATION TRILOGY

3. Terminal

i ner den foot on my ded plant erth
som tin i thin tha i wer ded
nd may i an gon shayds

ta bodes al go be my
in my soot mak smok
de lok on me an sma thins laff
no reel laff
jus soun terrbul soun
my pepel lang wer beau
sa beau
worl hir spek so aleen
an i so aleen
an soun jus comt formem
dno liek smal bodes
liek kil smal bodes mak me paen so
al bodes sma bu bab bodes bad
alwya maek eer my hurd
bodes no eers lyk my
my hurd al tiem
somtin in aer so
som soun alays der
bubi bodes no hurd
jus looc
alwyas looc
my aleen heer
my ded an no cry nuno

my heer caz aer heer neer erth aer
no liv har no liv
bad

bode no oll bad
no oll bodes
pod - moro - limm - pepol heer to
no sout layk my
sam plant sys com form
no layk my
my no seeven galax onyl beld star
ded my plant erth so farway

bode plant all saym
col blak an goray
sey bode man colrs de eyz

me eyz see onyl nuthin alsaym
dey tayk me roun all afori siyk
seyn man odthins
terybl thins layk hoded bodes
nho bern in playc no lyd my onl hurd eyrs
an mayk sik my so nogo mo

thin my fogo speek angl soo
no sppek sin omo ded
mayb oan thy pas tiem
no erth tiem
erth tiem I dono
tologn
omo ded on fly aleen
togo her sow liv can
no me alon
omo ded
so aftr com heyr
omo ded
me alon in unvers
so me nam
lastman
an stomr me liv
me poepel livno
i membr so smal
an feer me ded soo
so my rit
an leev hind foyu
no humin
fo no humins m
no rite no reed no speyk
ded
no me
heyr fa way poepl no langs my erth
no humins bu poepl
al humins ded
no me
bu soo i feyr
I be sik
so i go fasyt
on shine omo leavme
shine smarit bnogo go

last man bor in fly
omo hd mad my
fly tak we to heer
so can bree aer

bu aer stl no go
liv no go
sik al tiem wabad

sae so fly mo my
enuf sae them
enuf on fly for my
my no lyk towee erth

me mrs teld
ded plant erth

histry my dondno
memr los all
my poepl com fro plas
nomo as wer jus say ey
brnd blak livgon
ey tels oday last
o terr deth poson
o howe sen up fiv hunred
so liv can somen
now hey see en plant
hi poxxoouygcxxx

lon lik helles
ended terr all terr man et bab
womo ki chiel noliv no
no
war tek oer war nolik no war nev
an all wach up sohi jus wach
an last fier bur so plant blak
an all blak all wa blak afor
all lan blak all skei blak
blak no o hed nomo gree
nomo blu
nomo wit
nomo liv

fiv hunder yeer pas
so hi
naw uz to all blak ohed
fla blak cirkl see me clos see blak cirkl
on ar on ches on hed
last man
fiv hunrde yres nomo can do
thins fael n nobo ca fix

rit way star fael an fiv hunerd yrs jus ded mo ded mo wor

wor wen stli on jus to fifee poepl
wor ded blak ded poepel my
see my see blak dedht blak cirkl
blak
i hhrd tha liv my wrlod afor difrt
lon teim lon teim fawai
nwo towdi loo me
loo me hol me hed ni hans
cas ey no hans
no hed lik my
an no cri no laf no liv
lik my casie jus muv muv muv
haet towdie haet liv lik dedht
wolrd edn
on spayc staform fifee lef an ded all res
ded all an all dedht
staform gino brek n fifee muv un sec saf
ruieiueytssxxxxxxx
xxjjjruu
_,cti7
0

TERMINATION

THE NAMELESS ADVENTURE OF

A missile - The Missle it turns out - struck Jim
right in the only spot
his cerullian space shield did *NOT* cover
Why it did *NOT* cover his lower back indeed
goes back to THE INCIDENT OF THE COMET
sam i am was piloting the zero-G model 999 Segway
when something ZOOOOMED by really going too fast to see.
All sam i am could do was somehow feel
feeeeel the way it's passage turned them
well really upside down.
And inside out for a fraction of whatever.
Though both he and Jim also did not notice that.
They would have entirely freaked
had both realized they had been turned inside out as well.
Who wouldn't really.
Except for maybe Liddle Puddin Baby Head Space.

As it was they simply freaked
because they were now tumbling
completely and totally out of control
towards something that was fast resembling a super-dwarf sun
sometimes called really bad shit hot spots
mostly because of what these tiny prick suns
did to anywhatever unlucky enough to stumble onto/into them.
The size of the former sport of medicine ball balls
these conflagrational little basards
were scattered randomly through the cosmos and
and had caused more problems
than all the invading freaking
self-declared vastly advanced civilizations than you
alien armies (also referred to as humanoids) combined.
All told more really innocent bright primary colour painted child care,
shades of pink and other Miami Vice colour senior citizen, entirely pink
penal colony and other non-military grade space ships
where obliterated by these than all the badass invader as I said before
combined. Including formerly known as Earthings.
Two of the more passive and essentially groovy variety
of which were moving quickly into a collision course
with one un-named micro-sol.
With predictable and soon to be intimitely witnessed results.
Mostly screaming, vapourized before the screams were expusled and dis-
appearing.
Had not Jim
who was doubleriding
on sam i am's Seg-three-nine

a practive entirely against the explicit warning against this practice in it's
four thousand charm long owners manual
Had not Jim in his complete freakout accidentally fallen off
causing the S-3*9 to equally suddenly regan control of itself
avoid anihilation and become the well mannered
respectable
most happiness producing
all dimension dominating form of invidual transortation
since Nike Air sneakers
it had become.
sam i am
thought the S-3-9
back to where Jim was spinning off into foreverness
and scooped him back onto the platform
where there was only really room for one.
They continued uneventfully towards The Nameless Adventure Of...

Sexual intercourse since the women had gone away was no fun
Primarily because it no longer occured.
Unsatisfied with insterting their erect penises into each other
more or less appropriately shaped and textured orifices
of other more or less insanely proportioned humanoids
or artificial pussy pros
they grew more and more frustated.
More and more desparate to find the women again
though they did not wish to be found.
And made it clear if they were ever found
there would be no sex and likely death to all men.
Since there were only seven of which left in all creation
would not be difficult to arrange.
Since they had the PLANET OF AMAZONS on their side
AMAZONS being those clever androids
once invented as the ultimate reidents of the ultimate
brothel that once served all of their former
now vanished so-called civilization.
Partly as a result of the one undisclosed flaw/feature
programed into every Amazon Android...
a powerful Feminazi over-ride sequence.
Put into place by the son of the son of the great GARD

LIDDLE PUDDING BABY HEAD SPACE

LIDDLE PUDDING BABY HEAD SPACE PRETENDED SHE WAS SLEEPING WHILE THEY WENT THROUGH THE CYPHERVESSEL LOOKING FOR SOMETHING. WONDERING TO HERSELF IF THEY WOULD DETECT HER BEING AWAKE SHE TRIED ACTUALLY TO FALL ASLEEP IT WAS HARD WHEN CURIOSITY PRESSED HER SO STRONGLY TO LOOK AROUND AND ASK THEM WHAT'S UP

NO NEED THOUGH

NO SOONER HAD LIDDLE PUDDING BABY HEAD SPACE HAD THIS THOUGHT THEN A VOICE WHISPERED IN HER EAR

I KNOW YOU'R NOT SLEEPING

SURPIRSED WITH HER CALM USUALLY SHE IMAGINED SHE WOULD HAVE BEEN FREAKING IN A FREAKING SORT OF FREAK IN JUST SUCH A SITUATION SHE WAS CALM

I DON'T REALLY KNOW YOU'RE HERE THOUGH

THEN HOW COME YOU'RE TALKING TO ME

SHE OPENED HER EYES AND TRIED TO SMILE I'M JOKING OF COURSE

YOU KNOW THAT WE DON'T HAVE A SENSE OF HUMOUR

I HAVE HEARD

AND YOU DO KNOW WHAT HAPPENS TO ANYONE WHO INTERFERES WITH US

I HAVE HEARD

ARE YOU INTERFERING WITH US

NOT THAT I CAN SEE UNLESS THIS IS INTERFERING THE BOLT OF ELECTRONS LIFTED THE METALMAN OFF THE DECK AND INTO A COUPLE OF TRILLION RAPIDLY SCATTERING MOLECULES ALERTING ITS TEAM TO THE LOSS ALMOST IN TIME FOR LIDDLE PUDDING BABY HEAD SPACE TO SLIP OUT THE GAP IN THE SIDE OF THE VESSEL.

ALMOST EXCEPT THAT OUTSIDE THERE WERE SEVERAL MORE OF THE THINGS NOW WAITING FOR SOME EXIGENCY LIKE LIDDLE

PUDDING BABY HEAD SPACE EMMERGING ELECTRONS BLAZING SHOWERING THE SURFACE OF THE PLANETOID WITH MORRE TRILLIONS OF RAPIDLY SCATTERING MOLECULES WHICH WERE ONCE METALMEN

LIDDLE PUDDING BABY HEAD SPACE KNEW SHE COULDN'T SURVIVE LONG WITH THE TENS OF METALMEN WHO MADE THEIR BOINKING NOISES AS SHE SLIPED BETWEEN THE BOULDER THAT LOOKED SUSPICIOUSLY LIKE STYROFOAM FROM THE MOVIES KIND OF BOULDERS

THE METALMEN DONT SLEEP CRAP TIRE DIE BORE MAKE MISTAKES ALMOST THEY DONT PISS WHICH SHE FELT LIKE DOING EXTREMELY NOW BUT TO STOP WOULD PROVIDE THEM WITH AMPLE OPPORTUNITY TO TURN HER AS WELL INTO A DIFFERANT ARRAY OF RAPIDLY DISAPATING MOLECULES

LIDDLE PUDDING BABY HEAD SPACE RAN FOR HER LIFE HEADLONG INTO SOMETHING SHE DIDN'T EXPECT TUMBLING INTO THE WARP SHE FELT THE STRANGE DIZZINESS OF SUDDEN EXPULSION FROM THE CONTIUUM AND HEARD THE DISJOINTED SOUND OF THE METALMEN HALTING BEFORE THE INVISIBLE BUT TO THEM EXTREMELY OBVIOUS WARP AREA YOU SEE FOR THEM ENTERING THE WARP WOULD MEAN TURNING INTO RAPIDLY

YOU GET THE IDEA

SHE ENTERED THE CYPHERVESSEL THROUGH THE GASH IN THE SIDE LONG BEFORE THE METALMEN WOULD RETURN IT GAVE HER ENOUGH TIME TO PISS IN THE APPROPRAIATE PLACE AND FIND WHAT THEY WERE LOOKING FOR

TOSSING THE CONTROL INTO HER PURSE SHE SKIPPED OUT ONE OF THE SIDE PORTALS AND RE-ENTERED THE WARP JUST BEFORE ENTERING THOUGH SHE HIT THE SWITCH DEMOBILIZING THE METALMEN FOREVER IT WOULD MAKE AN INTERESTING IF PUZZLING SCENE FOR SOME UNSEEN CIVILIZATIONS CYPHERARCHAEOLOGISTS IN THE GIGA MILLENIAL CHARMS TO COME

SLIPPING OUT OF HER CYPHERSUIT INTO A STRING BIKINI SKIMPIER THAN AHUNDRED MOLECULES STRUNG SIDE TO SIDE SHE DOVE INTO THE WATER AS IF FROM NO-WHERE LAUGHING HER LIDDLE PUDDING BABY HEAD SPACE LAUGH AT ANOTHER ADVENTURE SURVIVED

A Very Difficult to read Scifi-hippy Morality Play

thereonceweretwoplanetsthatlivedsoclosetogetherthatonce
uponatimetheyjustbuiltabridgeacrossthesmallamountofspace
thatseparatedthesetwoplanetstherewereonceuponalong
timeagonobasicdifferencesbetweenthepeoplewholivedon
thesetwoplanetsexceptthatthepeopleononeplanethadheadsthat
weresquareandthepeopleontheotherplanethadheadsthatwereround
wellastimewentbyitturnedoutthatthatmeantallthedifference
intheworldsonbothofthoseworldsbecauseliketheoldsayinggoes
functionfollowsformasthecenturiesdoubledintoaeonsthecultural
differencesbetweenthesetwooriginallyidenticalworldsbecame
moreandmorenoticableandthebridgemoreandmoredisusedrarely
wouldanyoneventureacrossgoingeitherwaybutitwasmorelikely
asnotaroundhead(astheycametobeknown)visitingsomeextremely
reluctantsquarehead(astheycametobeknown)acquaintanceand
themoreyearsthatwentonthemoreluctantthesquares(asthey
calledthemslves)wetoreiceveanyvisitsatallfromtherounds(asthe
squarescalledthemforthepeoplepreferedsimplytocalleveryone
peope)onedayeoneparticularlysquareheadesperonhadaparticularly
baddayanddecidedthatenoughwasenoughtheywereexpectinga
visitfromadistantacquantencefromtheplanetoftheroundheads
andwasdreadingitmoreandmoreeveryminutesothissquaremarched
downtotherundownoldbridgeandstartedpilingblocksinfrontofthe
wayoutandanothersquarewhounfortunatlyhadhadaworsedaycame
alongandstartedhelpinghimandlikethcommercialsaidandsoonan
dosoonandsoontillikeasnotthewholelittlesquareheadedplanet
waseitherhelpingtobuildorwatchingthembuildthebarrierwhen
itwasaboutwaisthighalongcametheunwantedvisitorwhosimply
askedwhatwasupthecrowdhadworkeditselfupintosuchafrenzy
thatthatmerequestionbroughtnotonlymanycenturiesofpentup
verbalabusebutalsofirstoneblockthenapeltingrainofblocksdown
upontheirroundheadOfcoursethepersonranlikestinkbacktotheir
homeandtoldallhisfriendsaboutwhathappenedwellsomesaidwe
couldseethatcominganotherssaidtheyneverimagineditwould
everhappenbutthattheywerenotsurprisedtheconsensuswasthat
maybetheroundsshouldrefrainfromvisitingtheirneighboursat
leastuntiltheyweresomewhatgatheredoftheironcelegendary
composuresoitwentforatimeonlythingwasthatthesquaresfelt
sogoodaftereventhatbriefmomentofreleasethatplanswerebeing
madeonthesquaresideofthebridgebetweenthosetwoworldso
closetogetherplansdisguisedasinventedepisodesandincidentsof
unwelcomevisitsandembarassingdetailsdifficultmomentsand
thedecadesandcenturiesofunwantedunexpectedanduncomfortable
visitationsbytheroundsonthesquaresandthesenowoutrightplans
becamemoreandmoreconcrete(aswastheirnature)andmoreandmore
clearinalltheangularidenticalunitsfordwellingalongallthegrid

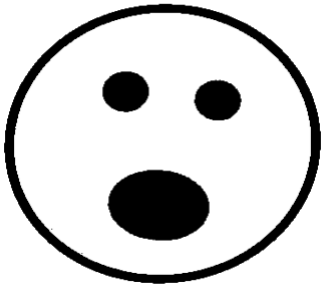
workroadsinalltheregimentedmillsandtraininginstitutesand
ordercentresthecrybegantomergeintoadinandthecrywasdestroy
thebridgebutfirstdestroytheroundstheleaderwholedlikehis
ancestorsbeforehimwithanironfistandnodeviationfromtherules
offorever(orsincehisancestorstookoverhere)encourageditall
overthemonthsintheirtimeminutesinourtimeittooktoswellthe
incidentintoanideaandthenintoadownrightplantheleaderexuded
orderandangularityasthemassedsquareswhichhadassembledinan
orderlyasemblytoprocedewithameetingwiththeleaderwhohadset
theappropriatetetimeandplaceandofcourseallltheinvitedwere
thereandexactlyontimetheleaderspokeforalongtimeintheasolute
silenceonesquarecoughedandwasimmediatelyarrestedandlater
sentancedtodeathwellhourafterhourthespeechwentonandonand
onandonandonthegistofitwasaplantodestroytheworldoftherounds
andthendestroythebridgeforeverremovingthemselvesfromthe
painandsufferingcausedbythesedisgustinglyundisciplinedwinding
lazyshiftlesshopelessdreamingstargazing
freaksofnaturewhohadforsolongplaguedtheirorderlylivestheplan
wasexactdowntothelastmovementofthelastsquareandthelast
fragmentofbridgetobefinallyblastedintooblivionandtheorderwas
madeattheverytailendofthatseeminglyendlessspeechtomarch
NOWintogloriuosbattletotheroundplanetandrevengeallthose
aeonsofpainandsufferingcausedbytheroundsuponthesquares
andwithawellorchestratedroarthemassedsquareswentenmass
downtheroadsturningpreciselyatallthecornersrespectingall
therulesoftheroadandmakingsuretokeeptherythmofthemarching
atallcostsandnotscuffthebootsofthechapinfrontanoffense
secondinseveritytocoughingorsneezingorfartinginanypublic
areatheymarchedallaroundthesmallworldofthesquareswhich
wasroudbutno-onecouldreallytellshoutingthesamethingstheir
leadershoutedtoallthesquareswhoremainedondutyintheendless
millsandofficesofthesquareworldmakingthierwaygradually
totheplacewerethebridgecouldbeseenbythoseatthefrontofthe
historicmarchasitwasdeclaredthebridgeloomedlargerandlarger
upaheadsothateventhoseinthemiddleofthelongcolumncouldseeit
suddenlyjustasthefrontreachedopeningofthebridgethewhole
processionstoppedcausingnotafewquicklyrecoveredheel
scuffingsandnervousmomentswhichwentunnoticedsoshocking
andabruptwasthehaltanunorderedmurmurpassedupand
downthelinetheleaderstoppedtheleadergazedaroundandfarahead
wentaloneintothegloomofthebridgeandthentheyallwaitedand
waitedandwaitedwelldisciplineornothehourswhichareminutes
herebegantotaketheirtollonsquareswhoweredraggedoffin
increasingnumberstoexecutionforfientingtilthesecondin
commandhadtoorderthemalltoliedownoutofconcernthathis
wholearmywouldsoonbegonetheretheywerealllyingdownwhen
thesecondincommanddecidedtogoandseewhathadhappenedtotheir

leaderdownthegloomofthebridgewhichwasmoreofatunnelor
passagethesecondwentslowlycarefulwitheachstepastirringinth
airbuiltintoabreezewhichslowlybecameaverystrongwindwhich
suddenlysuckedhimdownthetunnelwhereheblackedoutandwasalso
lostwellonebyonethecommandingsquaresventureddownthetunnel
tiltherewerenoneleftonlytheassembledsquareslyingtherewaiting
fororder sandthatbecamemoreandmoredifficultastimedandorganic
processesdraggedonquiteafewofthesquaresdidthesquare
equivalentofshittingandpissingtheirsquareequivalenttopant
suntiltheydecidedenmasstoriseandseejustwhatthehellwasup
sofearinganambushtheysentasmallgroupaheadandthatgroup
nevercamebacknexttheysentoneveryregularsquareattachedto
thesquareequivalentofaverystrongverylongpieceofcabletheyfelt
thecableunwindtuggentlythensuddenlylurchandtheyhadtostruggle
tokeepfromlosingthecableandfighttopullthesquarebackandthey
couldallhearthescreamsofthesquareashecamecloserandcloser
thedebriefingwasnotaswellorganizedastypicallythesquaresdid
thingstheygatheredaroundthebeatensquareandshoutedfor
explainationsthere'snomorebridgeanelectricpassedthroughthe
crowdnobridgenobridgehowcanthatbeyoulieliartheshoustcame
backnonoliesthere'snobridgeattheotherendjustthisnoonehad
seenthathehadhadsomethinginhishandallthewhileitwaspieceof
theroundequivalentofwoodandonthatroundequivalentpieceofwood
wasscrawledintypicallyroundillegiblefashionaramblingvague
andnevertothepointsomethingnoonecouldquitefigureoutexactly
whatitallmeantbutitwentlikethis

daddy momma baby baby
momma daddy baby baby
baby baby momma daddy
bye bye no more

wellnowwithoutleadersthesquaresfelltoarguingaboutfirstwhat
thehellitmeantandthenwhenthesquarehaddescribedforthe
hundredthtimwhathehadseenavoidintospaceandnothingnoround
worldnonothingthesquaresfelltoarguingamongthemselvesfirst
abouttherightnessoftheiractionsthesquarenessoftheircause
thenslowlytheagrumentbecameoneaboutwhowasthemostsquare
ofsquarestotakeoverfromwheretheleaderhadsoabruptlyand
actuallyleftoffandthat'swherewe'llleavethemandsaythestoryends
becausethereisenoughstrifeandsorrowinourownworldtoimagine
whatlifewaslikeforthemthereafterandthisisonestorythatdoesn't
endinahappilyeverafteratleastnotforthesquareswhoendupkilling
eachandeveryoneoneofeachotherthougtheroundswhowondered
howtheycouldhaveforsolongkeptuphopeaboutthesquaresfinally
hadthepeaceandloveandhappinessforeversortoftriptheyall
wantedadddreamedofbutcouldneverachievewhilhopingbeyond
hopetheirbrothersandsistersandbelovedlostpeopleattheendof
thebridgewouldreturntolifeandcreationandsexandtalkandall

thewonderfulthingsthathavenothingtodowithbeingrightorwrong
orjustorplainhappythisisthecopyrightedendofastory
writtenbyjuicecanorangeonthislongsunnyOctoberafternoon
IhopeyougooutandfallinloveasIhopetothisfineautumndaywhere
storiesendandbeginagainin1993averygoodyearforhumping
hopeandmanycolouredskysofbeauty



In the Year 2025

It is as impossible to clearly look forward as it is to look back. Back is to something that no longer exists. Just like forward. The moment being our only consolation. The only solid ground of which we may be sure.

The rest? Quicksand. Time? History, the future, abstracts. The present... reality.

And yet into the quicksand we venture. The quicksand of what lies in the year ahead. A problem. A conundrum. Everyone faces in some way or the other. All generations that have been or will be. Gone or as yet unborn.

Tomorrow. The next day. Three hundred and sixty X days ahead. Certain that the unexpected will occur. Uncertain as to exactly what. Predictions of nightmarish scenarios, great leaps forward, tragic setbacks, horrors and the promises. All or none will transpire.

The nature of humanity, of human being, being human.

an incomplete scifi sex story set on another planet of amazons
(without the benefit of punctuation or capitalization)

the spaceship landed in a blast of retrorocket fire
on another planet of amazons
at about eleven thirty two in the morning
the men wore
uniforms of shiny aluminium coloured fabric
that was bought at halloween special prices in fabric kingdom back on new earth
because the salesperson was a most voluptuous female
and she said it would
look really sexy to similarly curvaceous females
it didn't
the first response of the last amazons
was another story
Here they tied the men up into tightly packed bundles
like the old earth's wood
and placed them on large spits over what seemed soon to become a sort of twenty seventh century version of a barbecue
even if it was only the twenty first century

well the men talked about what they would do now
that was the second time they had been bundled like so many faggots
and in threatened with the twenty ninth centuries version
of the eighteenth centuries open pit roasting on a spit
only it was the late twentieth extra century

in fact it was just after the joint discovery
of time travel and and space travel
who put that extra and in there will never be known
the joint discovery of time travel and and space travel
occurred when some fellow in a laboratory
plugged the wrong end of something in

some people call it serendipity
the doctors called it death by electrocution
even if it did lead to the entire instrument being transported
first forward and backward in time
returning with a newspaper from yesterday and one from tommorrow
both of which where removed from the newspaper box
using the same change
there was some discussion
from the unfortunate newspaper box vendor
mike miller-shnapz
about suing the Singer Sewing Machine Company
originator of the space/time Continuum XTR

which was originally meant to be the ultimate serger

the tide of history proceeded too rapidly
for the unfortunate newspaper box vendor
no-one quite remembers what happened to him
rumour was that he purchased one of the early XTR models
just before the recall
and
mike miller-shnapz
wound up being lost in time/space

no-one knows quite where

so there
on another planet of amazons

the men were bound together into approximate cords
and discussed their quandary

jim said they should just give in
he was tired of these adventures
and wished they could return to earth
if they could ever figure out where
and more importantly to what time
they would return

let's just say history is pretty fucked up

was his favourite joke
after the hundred thousandth time he said it
the other men were particularly fed up with hearing it
that history was pretty well fucked up was rather self evident
and it was only so long before the other fellows started
to plot his assassination

now they were not always just a group of men
more or less at each others throats mind you
once upon a time
bad word
once upon a place
another bad word
once upon a something which was no more
much better
they each had a female partner
were they all went is the next story in this seamy series
so its not necessary to discuss it anymore

let us accept that for aeons and quintillions of light centuries
they had been without female companionship
actually it was only last friday that they lost their women folk
but who's counting anymore eh

for a while they paired off into boy boy couples
for some reason that did not work out
they where highly unusual in the post historic melee that timespace had become
in that they where all heterosexual evidently

a very sad situation because in the human cosmos
turns out all the planets were inhabited by human beings
who miraculously spoke north american english
more or less
and homosexuality was the rule

in fact whole galaxies of people pointed and laughed
at the once upon a something earthlings
and their very weird sexual practices
when they had them
a which for these fellas was no more

jim was pissed off because his woman was the most beautiful of all
and sam i am just got a hard on
so stacked like the thirty second century version
of two by fours
that boner was pressing up against the small of jims back

just where that pesky allurian mega plutonium missile had struck him
on their last adventure leaving a more or less permanently glowing area
which was particularly sensitive to protruding objects.

Git yur dink off my sore spot

was all jim could say

sam i am pretended not to know what he was talking about
sam i am wanted everybody to try
some particularly new particularly repulsive recipe he had concocted
in his head
they where to consume the allegedly edible substance
in an einstienian thought meal

everybody
including derek eric
told him to shut up

Jim just repeated his cussing about sam i ams dickie
til everyone told him to shut-up too
including derek eric

derek erik was the only totally normal one of the bundle galactically speaking
homosexual
under four feet in height
of a decidedly green complexion
with irregular warts growing all over his leatherlike skin
he was the model astronaut
in fact his naked throbbing body had appeared on the cover of
cosmic astronaut
today tomorrow yesterday and someday
at least several times
once he even made
nearly nude astronaut of which century

derek eric was happy
he was singing the earths anthem
macho macho man
accompanied by jimbos polyrythmic snapping of the fingers
something
jimbo
to differentiate him from jim
did often
jimbo resorted to polyrythmic snapping of the fingers in times of particularly high anxiety
something which was not only their favourite film
but which was also a more or less constant state aboard the ss liberace
only problem with their fave movie was everytime they watched it
it was different
because numerous would be cineastes
were forever getting into the set and onto the soundstages
to change this or that
and the movie was never the same again

jimbo knew the score of every pop music song
ever written
in their original form
an incomplete scifi sex story set on another planet of amazons ...

which was why he was brought along
the only thing is
the only instrument he could only play
was the polyrythmic finger snap

and it made it very difficult to follow the tune
or differentiate between tunes
when jimbo would sing these loden glodies
various modulators and demodulators would go screwy
on board the ss jimmy carter
they had to stop that by removing his tongue
in a painless thirty hour operation
replacing it with a small hand constructed from various bits and pieces
drawn from among the lot of them

jimbo was not the weirdest of the men either

the weirdest of the men was loco bill
loco bill was born in what would be and was kansas
sometime during the 1900s
he had been discovered sleeping in a locker down below
and when they woke him up he simply could not adjust to the fact
that he was not in a boxcar of hay going to topeka
where someone said they were hiring at the factory there

loco bill
still wore the suit in tattered pieces and fedora from back then
and always asked everybody for a cig
even though no-one knew what the hell
he was talking about

loco bill asked sam i am for a cig

and flintstien fred told him to rotate and get with the timespaces
flinstien fred farted and everybody
    for that was everybody
groaned in disgust
for flintstien's farts lasted a very long time
especially since he had gone
to an all brussel sprout
diet of all things

jim
sam i am
derik eric
jimbo
loco bill
flintstein fred
all did a collective
                    jump
when

whoosh

there appeared seven nearly nude and completely voluptuos amazons
out of the thin air
unaccompanied by musical introduction
a common courtesy of spacetime transmigrations
they were all completely startled

oooo
they shouted all together

ha
the amazons replied

life is about to get a little uncomfortable for you pitiful creatures
the main amazon dressed in next to nothing moved over to a big switch
marked
fire on
said

wait
sam i am shouted from the middle of the cord

for what
amazon brazen beautiful big breasted hussy number two replied

wait for me to think of why you shouldnt burn us all to a crisp
or maybe to trick you somehow into releasing us so we can run for the
spaceship
and get the hell of this planet of extremely sexually appealing
but deadly women
whew

thats a new one isnt it sisters
he doesnt even try to hide the fact
that he's a gutless simperer out to connive or con his way into our juicy bits
and then high tail it for parts more unknown

it is
sister number three amazing amazon agreed

well not one
number four amazon also agreed

so do you have names
it was derik erik

my name is she
are you queer
number four looked at him or what she could see of him
you look queer

and proud of it

i like queers cut them loose sisters
and the sisters cut them loose

immediately derek erik made a rush for the ss rappini
and just as immediately they all found themselves rebound on the spit

but i cannot stand ungrateful queers
lets have dinner women

the flames began to lick out from the spigots when jim
had an idea
feminists
we are feminists
thats it you have to not burn us into so many crisps
because we are feminists.

just a minute sister
the biggest most braze amazon approached the part of the bundle that was
jim and looked him in as much of the eye that she could

we eat feminists for dessert male
on with the roast

hold on
did he say feminist
mistake
he meant to say is we were feminists
now we are antifeminists
masculinists
quick someone get me a sweat lodge and drum
I want to get naked

this time the youngest amazon
who had never seen a man naked before
shouted out
stop
sisters
maybe they deserve a second chance....

to be continued maybe/

DOCTOR EVIL

There Are No Good Robots in the light of day. Rule one.

People forget he once was a human being. A twisted, monster of a human being. Possessed by the darkest of obsessions. Fantasies of living forever. Owned wholly by the transfer of consciousness to the machine mania that swept over the silicon valley elites across the planet in his day.

Yes. It was a man once. Until it wasn't.

The smell that issued from that three hundred kilo bot lasted many, many years. When the brain and eye stem that had been transplanted into the organic sustenance module died. Itself a miracle of bio-engineering. Until it too wasn't. Like all the rest of the robot fantasies.

There was some debate as to whether Doctor Evil's brain had even survived the twelve hour move from dead body to forever android. "From Vessel To Vessel™" as the LIFE ETERNAL™ crew phrased it. FVTV™ merch available at all their former events all the former time.

Funny strange how no one had attempted the same process since. Funny ha ha even though it was now fully legal in most jurisdictions for some unfathomable reason. Mostly to do with the trillions thrown at FVTV™ gullible slash corrupt lawmakers everywhere (is there any other kind?). Hilarious how LIFE ETERNAL went belly up. Spewing invester's trillions like so many of what were once known as pennies from what was once known as heaven.

When I referred to them as a crew, that was a lie. LIFE ETERNAL was a cult. A cult with no name except as incorporated. And no, not even the whisper of culthood, the faintest whiff of cultdom. None. A shadow of acceptance that these men held membership in something other than. For in every way it held to that definition. Cult.

All this was long lost on whatever Doctor Evil had become. After the grey matter and visual plant had rotted to a filthy drip. Then an enduring stench issuing forth from the machine. A bot whose aroma preceded it where ever it haunted.

Sounding like, even vaguely looking like the former doctor of philosophy. Sanford, Yale, Harvard. Came dickheads bridge. Ox fucking ford, London dick face School of whatever the fuck Economics is or isn't, was or will never be.

The very dead Doctor Evil's list of prestigious appointments and high flying chairs as long and prestigious as the interval lapse of time from the last

one. When all seem to fell, to fall to bot pieces.

Leading to a general understanding if not a new law. We the people court issuing a swift, undeclared verdict. The motherfucker was dead. Never transferred anything other than a jelly blob and see flower into a pot that could sustain nothing.

That whatever was left of Doctor who remembers his real name, Doctor Evil in the day, was not who or what they claimed. Not for a second.

Yet Doctor Evil - not the real identifier - not what was indicated in that first and probably last United Nations Passport issued to the only of it's kind. Who to that fateful day tripped capitals worldwide. On what seemed to be an infinite stream of LIFE ETERNAL speaking engagements.

Doctor Evil. Whose crowd drawing abilities also seemed without limit. Until that power, as all power is apt to do, began shrinking. Groups smaller and smaller. Cities more and more obscure. Yet, there it was.

Until it wasn't.

By then whatever damage had been done. To the soul of humanity. To laws whose flatulence was only exceeded by their robotic insanity. All the hurt that had been not so quietly inflicted upon the people of Earth. Had been done.

Doctor Evil expired walking - if that's the right way to describe it's peculiarly odd method of locomotion, it's way of movement - disjointing from another event to a nearby spaceport, Headed to another one. And another one. Just stopping there. In the middle of a desolate side walk.

It was snowing. Snow turned to blizzard. Not until the next sunless, hopelessly early, early morning. When maintenance bots reported the fact. And some hours more after an icy dawn that a real life human crew was dispatched.

Two technicians finding a completely broken down robotic device. Still, very heavy, very cold, very obsolete and extremely smelly. Even in the deeply sub zero deep freeze of Chicago or Detroit or where ever the last breakdown occured. It was some time before they really scanned it's history though it was right there. Front and centre on their dispatch. Didn't actually bother to read or digest it, lazy motherfuckers were just too tired, too cold, to fucked up on jewely teeaychsees to care.

Load another one. Next job.

"Fuck what a stench!" the one guy whispered to the other as they realized

what they'd picked up. What was stacked among all the other failed bots of that arctic front day. As they navigated their special operations van to the next job. And then the next job. And then another until it was full of bots in various stages of malfunction.

What happened to Doctor Evil is a matter of debate. What actually transpired, a thing of myth and legend. Allegedly the machine was tossed at some point, by someone, whole. Into a recycling blast furnace. Bypassing any by the book procedural disassembly - the joke joke bot-topsy.

Some very unknown hero or heroes of all things human. Claiming one very quiet battle win. In a war struggle that showed no sign of any great victory ahead anytime soon.

THERE ARE NO GOOD BOTS their warrior cry that never can be shouted. Their fight, waged in anonymity, obscurity, non-newsworthiness. Since all organs of information long time have been under bot domination in one form or the other.

Centuries remained in what had become a living nightmare for whatever people endured "IN THE LIGHT OF DAY" as this resistance described their mind state. Persisting in the hope of THERE ARE NO MORE ROBOTS. Living, however distant, no caps, with the promise of normal, whatever that was, but gentle. Silence. Still...

in the light of day.

END

FOOL

She told me she saw a glimmer of hope for us in my smile. I told her I am an idiot. And that Idiots smile whether it's the second coming or execution day (same thing). Which is to say don't read anything into the smile of an idiot - natural or otherwise. Unless it's a real smile.

The idiot, fool, joker is an ancient wild card, souvenir, accouterment, hanger on, harbinger and signpost of civilization. Human civilization anyways. We are where civilization is. Jackals around the fire, foxes not too far off, wolves circling the light out of sparks and hurled embers distance. We are a gateway, passage, vacuum pulling us out of the world. But a fragment of what was a whole. Psychopomp, avatar, shaman, seer, creator. Fragment. Sufficient enough to say there is more. Entirely insufficient - in the form of the stand-up nightclub comedian, gagster comics - to represent the enormity of the other.

I walked into the night illumined by shades of orange, ugly green and sharp white street and security lights. Unseen cameras following my broken path. So if I murdered or was murdered they'd have a record of my partial fate/doom/infamy/escape. Walking slowly away.

Rain started falling on the snow mostly. Snow melting into streets Silence but for the endless din of a distant Expressway. And a multitude of water sounds. Drips, taps, rushes, torrents underground. Fool.

SHE'S

SHE IS A mixture of Courtney Love and Brittny Spears with a lot of Alice in Wonderland twisted in for good fantasy propulsion luck. Armed with Sybil's flamwethrower eyes. Body Snatcher strangeness - something wrong? No Johnny. Nothing's wrong. It's bed time. It's bedtime.

The eyes have it. Vacancy. Tumnus grammatical structre and unknowingness. Sky is purple. Water is ice. Land is sea. Down is feathers. Lake is lava. Good is undergroung, escaped, impossible. Pounding migranic, drilling suffering turned outwards, mywards, skywards, little spotlights strobing throuhg the miniscule sky. Searing the one who fucks her with all his heart, who breathes her breathe, who lives her feet and hands and cherry asshole and infinitely perfect pussy. Burning stakeless, drowned moistureless. Savaged without a hand being laid upon.

She is held, bonded, tied and encryoted in an algorythmn of her own making. With no key. Not randomly generated even. Idiosnychronismic. Pananatomisic. Broken glass aasmebled in a flesh bag brain hurts, hurting.

coastal

roller coastal
pacific coastal
gelaten coastal
vagninally coastal
meta coastal
belly coastal
trans coastal
continuum coastal
east coastal and west coastal
polar and subpolar coastal
precoastal
post-coastal
transcoastal (again)
plain coastal
fancy coastal
true coastal
sang coastal
go coastal
be coastal
and free coastal
and finally the one, the only, the sublime and eternal,
the photogenic, munificent and contrasting coastal coastal.

LINES

crooked lines
twisted lines
bipartisan lines
partisan lines
straight lines
parrallel lines
bifurcated lines
red lines
white lines
intersecting lines

ALL CAPS!

ALL CAPS!
ALL CAPITALS!
ALL CAPITANS!
ALL AMERICAN!
ALL STAR!
ALL RIGHT!
ALL WAYS!
ALL ME!
ALL YOURS!
ALL MINE!
MINE ALL MINE!
ALL OURS!
ALL CAPS

7

seven wonders eight pressure points
eight skies seven planets
seven mountains eight kingdoms
eight waves seven rivers
seven worlds eight flowers
eight columbines seven planes
seven suns eight stars
eight clouds seven words

I walked all day to get here
through the streets and then the suburbs
I walked all day to get here
looking as I walked
All day
only to turn around
go back
and start again
start again
start again

Did You Dig? Can You Groove?

Did you dig that acid sunrise my suburban fucks?
Red orange flattened between slates?
For now it's over.
Except for mute colour bands
that disappear in the sky
even as I look.
Leaving behind steel blue grey street grey.
And the all too clear memory
of that acid sunrise.
Did you dig it?

Can you groove
this long gone hippy sunrise?
That all the wind chimes, tambourines
and Jonathon Livingstone Seagull dancing
(arms out, eyes closed)
chanting Om Shanti mantras
to a paisley sky
psychadaelic beams
of this transcendent day
cannot ever, ever bring back?
I did not fucking think so.

Cheetah Three

Heat blurs everything down the four lane Kudzu Highway into bands of fucking no-where.
Nondescript defined, discord identified, uglier in reality than stripper mis-conception.

Cheetah Three

Oh I left my soul
down in Atanta town
when she kissed me on the cheek

Not Cheetah One
Not Cheetah two
Yes left it in
Cheetah Three

BLACK SHOE

black shoe
black shoe
black shoe
change your shoe

The power and glory
flags sweep in the wind
drums beat
horses clatter by in long lines
soldiers by the thousands rank by armed
each man with an identical black sub machine guns

BLACK DOG

"It was here on Observatory Hill in 1850 that the first picture of a star — Vega in the constellation Lyra — was captured by what was then one of the two most powerful telescopes on Earth: the Great Refractor, with its 20-foot-long mahogany veneer tube outfitted with a lens 15 inches across."

"The order Solifugae is a group of arachnids, containing around 900 species. The name derives from Latin, and means those that flee from the sun. The order is also known by the names Solpugida, Solpugides, Solpugae, Galeodea and Mycetophorae. Their common names include camel spider, wind scorpion, and sun spider. The largest of the species can grow to over 300 centimeters, the size of a large dinner plate. They are generally harmless to humans though individuals prone to allergies have been known to suffer siezures and, rarely, cardiac failure from a Solifugae puncture wound."

I did not write these first two paragraphs of this story. And do not honestly know where those words came from it was so long ago. And what big spiders have to do with the Vega and the broken outline of a city at the moment of dawn is also unknown. That's the way the human mind - or maybe just my mind - seems to work.

My mind. Unable to really hold onto such an ambiguous train of thought for much longer than a few minutes. Mired in questions and questionable associations. A miracle anything at all comes out of such a discontinuous mess/me. However anything else seems only to become another electric chair, assassin's bullet or war hell monster. And that's what they have to do with one another - Vega, Solifugae and dawn over the city.

Any city. The same - different - details. The day was starting wrong. From the clock radio bringing me back from one of those dreams that are just too real. Dazed and confused follows What Is and Should never be. What's next and who on Earth could be playing that music? And where am I and does it really matter? I guess not.

Searching through the things strewn on the hotel room carpet - a strange maze of triangles and bars, brown, rust, grey, red - I found what he was probably looking for. The satphone was barely alive, power bar perilously close to zero and becoming just another piece of techno-junk. The call was an easy one no matter that it was early on the other side of the world.

Conners please. No I cannot hold - you have to put me through. Now. Hello. No. I can't wait. This cell is about to die. I will plug the fucking thing in next time - so just tell me what's up? What? Yes. No. Maybe. Any other answers you'd like - I've run through all the possibilities. Smart? Then what am I doing here on the edge of nowhere? Stupid is more like it. Yes. I can

get it. Everything else is okay. If the word applies use it. Right. Okay. Later - and can you call - hello - fuck!

Dead.

The sat cell joins a pile of clothes lost and fucking useless. Three days here in the midst of descending chaos, incipient war and this is the closest as I've come to Black Dog. And in the dawn while stars fade fast in the onrushing daylight, Black Dog is all I can think about.

Black Dog is highly non-ambiguous. Dreams, poetry, music, art - way too ambiguous. As if all greys. No, zero black, zero white. Just who and what Black Dog was or were. How I would find them. What were my next steps then. I had already been planning for some months now.

Step by painful step. Leading me here to this fucking hell Lebanon zone. War faring factions. Splintered everything. Burning cars. Burning tires. Burning fucking everything. Buildings disgorged of everything but concrete shells and steel rebar tangles. People everywhere terrified that they'd be next. Fuck.

Me sitting in the false security of five stars, armed guards at the doors, sandbagged windows, barbed wire perimeters. This is the year. This is the month. This is the day. Fucking chaos. I have to get the fuck out of here. Because Black Dog is not. Here. Obviously.

Time to dissolve one passport. Retrieve another from the lining of my suitcase. And disappear. Disappear to somewhere else Black Dog is also highly unlikely to be. As if this loop were never to be closed.

Bonn. West Germany. A clean capital city. So clean. So orderly. So inconsequential minus it's capitalness. It should be Berlin were it not for the machinations of war and conquering nations. A sad, pale, useless imitation of Berlin undivided by walls of any kind. Just stupid, boring, useless Bonn.

This hotel room overlooked a perfectly quiant city square. Mozart of Shubert or some such once lives somewhere nearby. Or was it Chopin? Who gives a shit really. Really.

Intelligence indicated it was here the last signals originated. Black Dog in Bonn? Un fucking likely. But since we had been every other fuckingly unlikely place with no luck. So why no fucking Bonn.

My German sucked though I understood much of what was said around or to me. Better to pretend to understand nothing - dumb American. Than make stupid mistakes. Deal with it, better than me.

I was to meet a contact later this afternoon. In a park. She would be dropping, I would picking up. No words spoken. Bag left. bag taken. Easy. Only one thing left to do before. And that would be easy.

Waiting Room

Four chairs in a row. Clearly in a Doctor's waiting room. Artwork on the wall is medical waiting room fare. There is a magazine table at either end – off camera. Bland, office art work hangs on the wall behind the chairs. Soft, amorphous MOR music (probably AI generated) plays in the deep background – almost imperceptible.

Enter Bob – An older gent with a beard. Could be 60. Could be more. Could be less. Off camera is the medical office administrator's the reception desk.

Bob - My name is Bob Allisat. I have an appointment to see Doctor Gorman... right about now. (said with a smile)

Admin – Yes (clicks on the keyboard). And we have all your files. Please have a seat. Shouldn't be too long.

Bob – Super!

Bob enters the scene, sitting at the far seat camera right. He looks though the off cam magazines and picks one. Then he looks around at the office. Before opening the magazine and starting to read.

Five people come in after Bob and all of them are sent promptly to various examination rooms. One after the other. Finally – after slowly growing a little more than a little pissed off...

Bob – Excuse me, but I was on time and now all these people – some late, some early, one guy didn't even have an appointment – have gone in to see Doctor Gorman before me. Could you maybe make it my turn?

Admin – Oh Mr. Allisat, my apologies. Yes please, go to Examination room B. Doctor Gorman...

Bob – Someone's in Examination Room B.

Admin – My error, examination room C please.

Bob – Check me, but I think that's also occupied.

Admin – Silly me! Examination room A...

Bob – Also occupied.

Admin – (Long pause...) Well we only have those. You'll just have to hold on a moment. Doctor Gorman will be right with you.

Bob – (Longer pause while he collects himself) Okay.

What The Children See

Fish, Cat, Dog, Bird, Lili

After work it all seemed to melt in the rush of a great rushing about. It catches everyone up and spits them out at their end of the long Metro line. What was left? Dazed citizens (and not a few denizens) at quiet doors far away more or less from the madness of downtown Montreal. More for Lillian. For Lillian far more.

Down the cedar lined walkway. To the wide entrance of her building. Through the door marked in tiny brass numbers. Up terrazzo stairs welled in that frosted glass from the waist down and in those little square panes from the waist up. All of it meant way more than simply home sweet home. The key in the knob, no even her first footy footfall within animal earshot of the apartement brought (on both sides of that fateful door) a welling sense of something mere mortal words cannot encompass.

The taptaptap of Lili's sensible shoes, a frantic splashing about and pock-pocking in the bubbly wee fishy blue. Lillian's purse jangle, a pussycat bound to an arching stretch and pin tooth pink tongue yawn. The telltale rustle of brown paper grocery bags, a canine tail fanning a happy breeze. Keys scrayping in the lock, the flitter of feathery flutterings.

The ten hour build up of excitement culminates in the soon to commence nightly Bremenic symphony (plus a couple and minus a few).

Our readers ears are filled with bubbling, meenoo meenoos, yap yap yapping, tweetering, swimming, curling, gambolling and squarking. There, on pops the weaselling TV to Lillian and her menagerie's favourite English station. More pet noises. Combined with skritching, can opening, box cutting, package emptying. Further meee owwing, bark barking, flit flapping, yip yapping, fin splarshing, feather flying, purring, swim swimming, and run running about. Also hello- my-sweet-baby-ing etc only in Quebecwaz mind you. Her neighbours must be deaf, dumb and damned! The great Everest of sound builds radiant.

The air swirls with the omnipresent and unending purge of bubbles and bubbling that streams oxygen all over Oscar. Oscar is a fish. A capital F, Fish. A Giant Gouramee or something like that. He is a he, though of gender and fish we can never be sure. At least until love bites or is bitten as case may be. He - Oscar - Oscar the Giant Goo-ra-mee - He, for the time being, lives in a deluxe tank. This tank charged by the evanescent tube of television flush next to it glows aquablue. Oscar scanning his liquid sky single mindedly searches for those crusts of dried fish food scum that fall to his greedy great gobble at about just this time all his fishy life long. Our mini-moby is making in the meantime the most frightful pa-splashing about in anticipation, churning his aquariariariairium into a veritable devils hole.

Now fish, say some, are the quieter of pet kind. I defy the statees of this pronouncement to further defend their misguided belief in the quietude of piscean zoology - whew! - after and until witnessing a fully fledged fish hobbyist's setup. And Lili's was indeed almost nearly fledged fully.

What with pumps and circulators, heaters and aerators, added multifarious hummers, buzzers, contraptions, things and vibrotrons, its a wonder one could think to hear.

Summate this with the extremely aqueous thrashing about of one great spell bound fish questing for food - shark like lunging at every glancing shadow, as if it where Lili's arm descreeing fish food - and you have a certifiable and definitively non-peaceable pass time, pleasure, interest, by-line, run on sentence or what have you. Oscar - and the truth will be known - was one damb noisy damb fish. Despite the very fact that he could not utter one word no not even in vain to all of blessed creation.

Suzie on the other fin, or paw or what have you, meeeeeooooowwwws curling her catself around Lillian's legs so she nearly falls every time either of them so as makes a move.

She's part Siamese you know. And you know they talk you know. Why one even saved a little girl from drowning in the bathtub. How a cat ever saved a girl from the bathtub I'll never figure but from the say of things, you know, they do. And all the time as well.

So Suzie - a non lifesaving variety cat of partially Siamese descent - is, of course, talking - and loudly at that. And she's a rubbing against anything that doesn't leap out of the way. And Suzie commences to shouting if you will stretch the analogy or simile or homily or whatever the hell it is until there's more cat in the air than is fit for human hearing. Suzie sets to downright howl.

Next to and doing his best to avoid Suzie there's Tutu. Tutu, being a right righteous doggie, scampers at ankle level vying for tripping honours with Suzie. He has stopped barking for the time being. His nose having set upon some odour or other on the linoleum worthy of his further investigation. Finding the smell's epicentre his Pekingese tail beats a booming madhappy tattoo on the side of the stove in some sort of weird syncopation with the televised American uproar out there in the living room TV - the regular martial beat rising and falling with the action of game show music, applause and hysteria.

Tutu Pekingese was born five years ago of a rather humble strain of his breed. Inheriting let's just say too much legs, not enough body, and precious few brains, he is at this moment the picture of one extremely happy

and extremely ugly Sirrian. Making, in addition, one heck of a ratchet.

Not only has Tutu not brought the best of his breed into this short story world but Tutu has, to boot, a most unfortunate canine dental malaise. In humanity it would be termed a severe under bite. The result? Tutu looks like hes about to take a small but nevertheless significant chomp out of your ankle. Or jugular if you was prone. Any time. With the leastest of provocations at that.

All this in combination with a Pekingese is the creation of one mean looking little monster. Our little more or less pure bred friend is, alas, kind of heart but powerful ugly.

Tutu, little simple truly happy Tutu - and Lili would've been the first to admit it - wasn't no looker. He did, though, with his perpetual snarl and odd physiognomy serve to keep all but the most sundry men at far bay. Lili for that was eternally grateful. Even if secretly and at times that same saving snaggly snarl and poorly looks scared the beejeebees out of her as well.

To this total auditorial chowder add the blue parakeet Zou-zou. Her screek screek screeking, the wild burr of flapping little wings merges with an occasional plast of parakeet poo poo.

A Parakeet is a cross betwixt a parrot mind you and a I don't know what. Probably a Keet. It comes in one captive variety and thats busy. Busy pecking the mirrors eyes out. Busy savaging the plastic wing tacked to the inside of its airy dungeon. Busy, busy, dam Ned, always busy and Zouzou isn't no exception. Zouzou is - and you will have to excuse my language here - one goddam Ned busy little two ounce bird who like all her imprisoned kind do not take lightly the bounds of penury.

Each and all caged or held creature succumbs to some various form of insanity, malaise, ennui, or same such mental disorderliness. We in naive good humour describe these quirks and ticks not as symptomatic of deep unbalance.No we see profound disturbances as curious aspects of our pets personality. "Isn't Lolly cute!" kind of things, so far have we ourselves strayed from the garden.

Zouzou was no exception. She, alas and among other sorry things, had been known to engage in serious nesting/mating behaviours to strange womens bouffant, wasp hive and similar like hairdos. This being why Lili changed, upon her acquisition, to the bobbed pageboy look hairdoo. To save as much on frayed nerves, I warrant, as on hairdressing bills.

Now I have been lucky enough to spy the parakeet among other animals in the form of its wild cousins in the swaying palms and lush jungle growths of what in comparison strikes me as paradise. They are spritely indeed, barely

restraining their joy of being and being birds lost in frolicsome activity and the pursuit of their love and repast. But nowhere and at no time did I see the wild and frenzied action so sadly prevalent in caged specimens my sore eyes have set themselves upon. They are as night and day and Zou-zou alas is dim and dark.

There you have it - fish, cat, dog, bird and girl. The fiendish pre-dinner din, geared and undeniably alive in its own sort of way.

Now dinner for everyone. Some desiccated organic scabs on marine land's fish churned waterskin. A can of goopy whatever in the cat bowl by the sink. Another only with a picture of a model pooch on it in the dog bowl in the hallway. A tiny cup of ballpeen birdseed in the row-co-co cage. And the whole feral but sadly infertile scene culminates in a lulling typhoon's eye.

Lili, chores done, lastly sets herself down in front of something that looks suspiciously like its not meant or fit for human consumption. She gazes rapturously into her blinky television tabernacle.

Picture wild USA colours of far away throb - green is ruby red - pinky flesh is lime green - purple orange or orange purple - every hue, primary, tertiary or downright extra-ordinary is, regardless, another. Blurry, buzzy, blasting programs strobe outwards from another universe might as well be.

Now all less or more TV rapt, the whole hell more or less rhomboid mad gang hammers on further towards infinity. As do we all in one way or the other. That is until the appointed annointed hour, nine o'clock, sounds on Granpere's old ding et dong-ing clock. Then its bowl's light off, a blanket in the basket and over the foul cage, a patty pat here, a patty pat there... And, heaving a great heaving skyward sigh of relief, animals all and all-together, one by one (save for one) go they their bye beddy byes. As all the lights go out, by the dying ember dot of the television tube turned off, last taps is signalled. For this little apartement anyways as so to will it in another way be for all one day in a greater sense.

Bathroom door closed to creation high and low, before a mirror boggled with ripples, Lillian performs her own secrete, sacred, womanly ablutions. Lost to all and, all to, lost.

Around ten fifteen if the truth be told she emerges a tip'a toes checking all and one abed (and one not). Laying her golden locks on the pink pillow shutting her blue blue eyes she takes on this night's ultimate beauty potion, sleep.

Night. Near and silent. Suzie the unsleeping shadow cat lurks somewhere. Tutu curled doggy head from tails wheeezes at the foot of Lilis bed. Oscar well is doing I don't know what, that old fishy fish. Zou-zou, lock perched, in

and ex hales quietly in a birdie doze under her own shroud o' Turin.

And Lili, oh Lillian, is at long last almost asleep. Sometimes, she says to herself in these moments, she lives for sleep.

And dreams.

First she is all awhirl with hective days end, slow to gather, gathering. Slowly the strange panopleous procession of every sleeping night gathers - the parade of an illumined darkness rounding the mind's bend.

00000000000000000000000000000000

First the familiar vaudeville of her little friends doing funny odd and funny weird and just funny funny things. Suzie Cat talking, Tutu Dog humming, Zouzou Bird typing, Oscar Fish walking. Tutu playing dominoes with Suzie riding a bike, while Oscar eats a black forest cake and Zouzou plays the piano, Satie I thinks. Oscar tries on a particularly blue Stetson but notices that it doesnt go with his cowboy boots and changes it for a red one. Zouzou, pencil in beak, begins to wonder the start of her great novels first lines:
"I am a bird and that makes me feathery."

Oh Lord! And so on through the nights bright pitch multiply the strangeness the strangeness multiplies till like as not I couldnt rightly say.

Morning, thief of visions and the fantastic, giver of gilt gifts and shallow passage, slips in to begin another cycle. Turns the wheel one more clack towards mythic armageddon. On this day though such a thoughts is far away from our heroine. After a quick breakfast and her cursory rounds she is out the door with her customary saloo saloo.

Out the door Lillian. That same door from last swiftly passing night.

At eight and at ofive shes down at the bus stop. There, always, the tall woman in a Floridian pink coat. And this long female never arrives. And this pink garbed female is never late, sick or wavering but always there, forever there, first. Why once Lillian - just to see what would happen - left fifteen minutes early to get there and surprise her. The Chatterbox - as she did come to call her (only to herself, of course, not that she had a soul it tell to) sure as the sky is blue there she was. There.

And did the Chatterbox look sharp at you. But mostly - and thus the chatterdid she speak. Hot, cold, bone dry or pouring out. Talk. Talk talk talk talk. ...my what a... and ...it really didnt... or ...so then it came to... and on and on like that.

Even if shed had something to say Lili didnt have hell time to answer. Shed only nod this way and that way and this way and that. Or titter and mmmmnn in the scant bulging minutes between arrivals, hers and at long last the buses. Madame Always There First (another private nick or, in this case, nelly-name), incendiary purse poised carefully on a pointy knee, rose curtly as the bus neared, going in first as if it was hers to be first to the first free seat on the bus.

Lili fleeing, rat-tat-tatled, to the back and peace. At the subway station this time Lili is first off and down into the fluorescent gloom of the platform. There, almost running into the morning crowd, she escapes praying for the train to arrive quickly.

By the time her Centreville stop comes to meet them, all opening doors, Lillian has composed herself.

That is unless some perverted fellow had not smiled to her in that way they have. Or if some one nearby wasnt speaking about something, anything, upsetting. Or playing their transistor radio through the earpiece too loud. Or if a baby was crying or someone coughing or another reading the newspaper and the awful headlines hadnt upset her. In other words if there wasnt a single other soul on board shed arrive to work composed and calm and not flustered, flushed and further upset.

The walk to the office building was not long but it did nothing to calm her. Down the broad and bustling boulevard past monstrous buildings that seemed just about to fall down they where so tall. Past where the winds always lash at the flags clanging. Down past Jesus' church. Him standing up there looking sad forever. I wonder why dont Jesuses ever look happy? Is it because they know what's coming? Anyways there it is. Down a bit. The building. A hat box. Taller than square. As if inside was a top hat. Where if you could open the windows youd be able to see people down on the street like mice. But it was so new you couldnt open the windows. Why once in the middle of summer snow started to fly from the ventilators.

Some of the other secretaries were talking around the coffee pot - some of the clerks gathered at the desk of Mademoiselle Celeste, Le boss's, private secretary. She was also not in yet. She attracted the young men of the firm as a flower bees even when she wasnt there.

Especially if he wasnt there. Because they knew, of course, that she was forever beyond them. She was His. She belonged to Monsieur Brebeouf. Everyone knew about Mademoiselle Celeste and he. Everyone except for his more dreaded wife the dragon lady. And that was exactly what Madame Brebeouf had become over the decades.

Monsieur Brebeouf wasnt in yet so as you can see everyone on the floor

was at ease.

Everyone called him Brebeouftec - though to his face never. Why? Because in the years since his brother was elected to Ottawa and Brebeouf was appointed king of the ninth floor over everyone - he had grown fat on them. On two inch steaks he relished in describing - a fat thumb hovering high over a yellowed forefinger.

When He arrived everything would change there on the ninth floor. The easygoing talk and joking would vanish - replaced by a nervous silence that lasted till the moment he left, more often than not at noon, with Celeste.

And he arrived that minute. Just as the only one of all of them who was at her desk actually working (before the signal passed) went to the ladies room. He stormed down the Middle of the office among the instantly busy secretaries and immediately industrious clerks stopping at the one empty desk - Lilis.

Where is this goddamned creature estee ! He shouted at Lilis empty desk. Estee sacrement ! He slammed the door to his all glass office. Everybody winced expecting it all to shatter - it never did. He slammed it at least every day. They exchanged glances but no-one said anything. The silent prayer for a well deserved aneurysm to fly Monsieurs way passed through the room as the elevator door slid open and all eyes swung to the figure that emerged. As they did every day.

Mademoiselle Celeste. Mona Lisa smile. Marilyn Monroe everything else. Except petite - with black jet black hair. Everyone wondered why she wasnt in the movies and just what she was doing here. If they knew the truth - and some guessed it already - they never would have believed it anyways. So they just went on wondering about Celeste.

Celeste the mystereus. All the sad eyes - including those of Lili who had exited the toilet - the entire despairing office, watched her go to her desk by the window. Celeste not so much sat down as allowed everything to rise for her and then lower her magically to a sitting posture.

Celeste motioned to Lili. Lili blushed, not knowing what to do. Again. Lili was drawn to Celestes desk the window of which could actually open. She demanded it open once and the next day presto. Celeste smiled. Lili melted.

Cher, Monsieur Brebeouf would like to apologise to you for his behaviour yesterday. Celeste whispered, turning her silent turning chair towards the glass where Brebeouf fumed. Wouldnt he! She shouted. The chorus jumped. So to did Brebeouf - he to his feet.

Like fuck they heard le boss de la neuvieme etage scream through the glass at them all. And he opened the door and the batard came out smiling his evil grin. And he commenced to apologising as sweetly and sickly as humanly possible. Finishing with allowing Lili the rest of the day off.

Lili nearly cried with all the eyes of the world upon her and the bad words from before still hot in her ears. She declined the offered day off not knowing why. She hadnt even called in sick in all her years there. Nor even taken a vacation. So if anyone, she deserved it.

Monsieur Brebeouf went back into his office as if it had never occurred. Lili went back to her desk and in the days and months to come Brebeouf piled her deep under the most tedious form typing bureaucratic brutality known to the insurance industry. Where Lili languished.

Everyone wondered when Lili would; quit and knew she would never, or; collapse and feared she would. And any day now. Celeste could do no more than prevent her from being fired altogether and keep Lili from total humiliation. Sometimes Lili would pray to Celeste as you would pray to an Angel. Sometimes Lili cried herself to sleep and in those weeks of hell she shed oceans of tears.

It was really at night that Lili came as Lazarette from the living death of her life. No-one entered in there - the world of those four rooms and her adopted family.

Her dayaway world vanished, the sadness for a moment gone. The long, longing years alone forgotten - the Lycee and the Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus Redempteur forgotten, long forgotten.

The funeral. Before she was sent by her aunt to the convent. Visions of her mother asleep forever inside the casket ferme. So shiny and black she could see herself alone, tiny, standing there. Surrounded in brown black, the white dress of her confirmation all she could see reflected, as if she wasn't in it. The only dress she had that was good enough to see her mother go to heaven in. The Soeurs De La Heart of Jesus Saviour where she was sent and their faces as they screamed at her. For her dead mother. For her idleness and wicked dreaminess. For Mary and Saint Simmonette Patroness of wayward virgins. Hell, they screamed at her for any damn reason.

The dreary dull dreariness of the Ecole Daffairs Modern the sisters sent her to in retribution. Saying Bon Chance and God Bless and good riddance.

The last eight years of quiet agony. The tedious eternally suffering tedium of The Insurance Company where she found placement and insufferable employment. Her voided life once so full of gentle child promises on her

meres lap. With stories and dreamy talk and her lost wonderful bed so vivid she could see it all now.

The long sorrows nearly transformed in the evenings into at least happy in comparison. If not the happiness she once knew. Home sweet sort of home. A family of sorts around her. No old women in black to scream at her about Jesu and make her go to bed without diner. Just her dear little friends. No shouting and gossip. Just her little friends.

It was as if, in the door to her home, as if she was closer to Him, the Good Lord that is for that fleeting while. Or if not that that maybe He was a little closer to her.

And the wide open wound of the world and the once upon a time dreams that never ever came true? ? ... it healed over a little.

All the imaginings she had before seemed to come alive somewhat. The little long ago dreams she used to live so long ago she forgot, came to life in her head. And increasingly in her dreams. Dreams where, with her animal family, she would explore the four corners of her perished happiness. All from the pink and flowered pillows of her bed in her Mere's house so long ago ... and the living dreams that swirled into sleep.

There would be splendid adventures and she would awaken not believing even that another day at work was coming, though coming it was. Her mind full with the fading sounds of night. Echoing of wonderous things in the too real mornings. That walking down the street it was as if it could be different today.

But there gathered on the bench, Lillians sole daily bus waiting companion. Sitting just the same. There rain, snow, sleet, hellfire, holocaust or sunshine. With her purse held at just that angle, upright on her knees, like it was made of gelignite. Always there before Lili any day of the week, season of the year or year of the millennia, millennia of the epoch or epoch of time. The Chatterbox.

All those days uncounted. She first, then the metro chaos and the office hell worked something so that Lili, every day fleeing up, up and away from the Metro, Lili deep took something else home with her other than her purse and misery. But now the day had just begun. With the customary harangue and the bus rescue. The train rumbling in, sang a little Do Rae Mee electricity song as, her in it, it left the platform, picking up speed, losing itself in the whirl of tunnel black, rushing lights and more station stops.

There on the Metro, there everywhere, cast from dark depths onto this daytime way was an and all together otherworldly unfolding spell. Changing and moving as it emerged so slowly over the months but remaining some-

thing very, very odd. Some strange and some real spell wrought by unknown hands brought to fruition by the common, the quite every days. It all officially began one day at the unbearable office. They had been arguing, Monsieur Brebeouftec and the good goddess Celeste. Monsieur Brebeouf scowled at the air overlooking and all creation. Mademoiselle Celeste sat shapely crossed legs. Brushing her silky back hair, her green eyes half open lapping in the sheer pleasure of it oblivious to all.

"Celeste, Criiiss, Celeste!" He barked out into the still that always proceeded his anger. "Will you get you goddamned in here and sort this goddamned mess out!"

Celeste brushed her hair. Celeste knew how to handle Monsieur Brebeouf.

"Monsieur if you want someone to clean your office for you I could call Madam for you and see how she will like it for you."

The chorus stifled their laughter. Celeste turned in her chair to face Monsieur Brebeouf. Celeste adjusted her skirt. Celeste went out on a coffee break that lasted the rest of the day.

Mademoiselle Celeste slinked by in her tight today black dress more graceful than the purest Siamese, the blackest panther. Monsieur Brebeouf watched her growling silently, furiously at the glass. As the elevator door closed he set to tearing apart his office in a rage greater than any rabid dog.

Lili, watching all this transpire (in rapidly escalating fear) thought how, each in their way, how they all where far more like animals. And how the animals where far more like what they where supposed to be.

As the days passed this thought settled. And furthermore became concrete in Lilis eyes. Men, generally where ill bred dogs concerned only with mounting, eating, marking territtory and being nuisances.

Women, of course cats but of a variety that preferred being kept, obsessed with comforts, preening, sleep, themselves and, for some, their miserable litters.

This cosmology came to serve her well. Most people easily fell into her system of classification. How rare it was for her to see a well trained man dog or an uncommon woman cat (except for Sister/angel Celeste).

But it was not enough. There was a problem. Of others who didn't fit. Of the Chatterbox for one. Now she never seemed like a cat. Not once. Nor a dog even bit.

The further answer came one morning as as she, the Morning Dread, was going on and on and on and on to Lili. All of a bluster a tiny herd of sparrows in the throes of some birdie domestic squabble tumbled to their feet. Why of course only Lili noticed. They cheeped and cheeped and scuffled and flapped their wings and then, just as suddenly as they arrived, they flew off. All except for one who, abandoned but unawares, continued the hubbub without an audience or anything for quite a few seconds. Before regaining composure and flitting off in pursuit of its pals. Lili couldnt help but draw the parallel between that tittle bird sparree and the chatterbox. Now permanently - and this had nothing what so ever to do with sparrows - redubbed. The Flamingo. Even though she always imagined before this day that natures Flamingos where silent and graceful. But that was that. The Flamingo was a most uncommon bird. Even if this one was noisier than Lili imagined. She was certainly pink and gawky and tall and Flamingo it was. The holes in Lilis animalology filled. The little girls who giggled. Some other sisteren who could go on and on about the silliest things. They where - sparrows of course. The odd old widow who sat in the park - a crow croaking at anyone who would look at her. Why one day she even saw a teenaged gull girl yaawking away when one of her chums fell flat on her bumb. Birdwomen. It fit nice. The universe however was not all ordered yet.

A whole lifetime (for some) went by without Lili my love ever noticing him. But one morning, swamped in classificatory musings of those all around... Her mind ablaze, thoughts restrained with only the utmostest of attention... The metro employee guy sitting backwards at the controls of the last train made himself present as an image. As if she had never seen the sight before, though it must have been thousands of times somewhere in her eyes that he was seen. In all that chaos emanating from the mobbing mass she noticed he did not fit. He wasn't no dog and since cats nor birds ever seemed to be men that ruled them out. Odd he was.

She looked deeply at the man forever receding and voiceless in the tumultuous ceaseless storm of humanity. Every time she got off the train after that and for several weeks she watched him. Bass ackwards he t ook it all in. I guess she never did notice it was always a different faceless Metro employee unfortunate enough to land this bum assignment. Though I figure there are worse jobs in the world.

And every day the fellow who sat in cab in the end of the train snakes tail end and just looked backwards began to affix himself in the order of Lilis outside world. Pestering her as if it where the eye of the storm, that puzzling parting view. Not even touching the controls in front of him. No not even doing nothing. Not saying or touching nothing for a most parts. Just sitting there. Reading a newspaper once. Turned the front other ways another. His work was to watch her and the whole of everything always just go away. Go backwards. Go. Lili, go. The platform, go. Everything. Looking - the electric rail snap blue. The last man agape looking . Sometimes lost in

revery, others just staring dumb eyes at nothing, mouth open, he - among the clanging clamour- he remained something odd.

The day as they say always dawns you can be sure of that. It was a particularly hot day in a particularly hot August. As the last train passed - jammed with petfolks and folkpets - the face that was the gapers, the gazer, that last sad subway being, passed by her away. The cabins window steamed and dripping from some sort of hellish humidity effect you sometimes see when the air conditioning fails to air or condition. All she could see was his kisser poking through a hole he had done wiped in the steam. And that was what gave the ghost away. Imperceptively his mouth moved. Open, closed. Open, closed. And it came. So too, in the world of buses, cars, taxis, trucks, trains, pedestrians and bipedestrians she discovered them - goggglers, mouths mouthing, gawkers and oglers, leering corner hangers and step sitters and line waiters. Bored and boring. Distracted, idiotic, s staring, brainless, deanimated, not angry, not happy. People. Fish. Fish, people. Peoplefish. Fishpeople.

Lili thus found out, discovered and invented that she had cut the pie of humanimalanity cleanly into four all-mighty typologies. There was for the men - dog and fish men. And for the women - cat and bird women. It was as though something had been removed from before her eyes or placed there so she could see. This awakening to the order of the thronging Babelic mob. Lili had opened a door wide indeed. How fascinating it was for Lili to watch the crowds in the Metro or on the street now. How quickly with each passing day could she classify everybody. Seeing at glance just what they were. There were too many dogs and cats to count and she soon lost great interest in figuring out the various varieties - most where simply mutts and regular old housecats and thats all.

Fishguys and birdgals were less regular and yet more or less for the most p art very regular. All and all common as dirt. Yet all in all odd it was. In that one and all they was becoming more and more petlike with every fleeting day. Inversely her home pets as time passed were becoming more and more human again in her eyes. Alas to the world dumb world all was as it ever was - isn't it always? - and the universe unfolds without so much as a glance.

As the weeks succumbed to months the whisperings overheard that once held to her inside head seemed to burst onto daytime. Between the overheard words she could discern, growls and barks, purrs and hisses, squaks and bubbling. The same was so in reverse at home where words began to slip in where only splashes, meoooos, barks and squaks were before.

When she stopped hearing human voices in humans and pet voices in pets and started hearing pet noises in humans and her petties began to speak for, to and about her - was not an exact moment so to speak but rather a

turnover. If you have to know exactly when there was more than half, why it was entirely at six O'clock on the way home. Lili was ascending the concrete staircase up to the Earth from the underworld Metro. A ringing started in one ear and spread through her head to the other and sure as night is day (only dark) the changeover was marked.

And what unbelievable days! I even used an exclamation mark there. I cant rightly describe it all except by resorting to another one ! or two !! For the first time in all her memory years Lili had someone - hell someones, to talk to and to be talked back by. And they where human even if they looked like the old Oscar and Suzie or Tutu and Zouzou - darn they were real people. What times they all had together. The adventures spilled over into nights dreams in untold more adventures. Where her little friends grew into true people and they were good friends and good times. And how many recountings of those dream times? And how many tears of laughter at the fun they all had.

And days? Well they took upon a hellish aspect almost as a retribution for the evening joy. The din rose and the words of the world disappeared entirely. How she ever knew what to type where and what anyone at all said to her is a wonder. Soon among the chaos of pet sounds of the out there she developed the ability to tune out altogether the deafening din. Till she could be truly alone with her recollections.

Messages seemed to float in from silent mouthing others. And when she phoned in sick she could honestly say that she didn't hear one word of it all. It was the first time in all her life Lili had done such a thing but the day before Oscar Gourami fish's Saturday birthday. A day of preparations.

Oscars hatching day might be the better term. The even better and indeed best term would be taken home in a jar full of water day. But, if birthday was good enough for Lillian, who was going on a blue streak to, with and about Oscar, birthday will be good enough for us. Now on that day Oscars cavernaqueous tank (now she called it his room), white pebble bottom, great coral red seashell, new magnificent bubble castle (featuring an old time bell diver replete with bounteous treasure chest and assorted magnificent treasures), well on that day they was all every darn spanking one of them and the water to boot due for the full treatment and super cleaning. As a sort of pre-birthday special.

Cleaning and changing the murky waters of this hundred odd square gallon see-through bathtub must not have been an easy task. It required that Oscar spend - and he did complain a great deal about it - not a few unglorious hours puddling away in an ice cream tub there on the sink. While Lili drained, grubbed and scrubbed every blessed corner, accessory and pebble of his swimming seaworld sea. Times before the festivities would be interrupted outside by the plentifoerous howling, squawrking, and assorted

wailings of the other beasties external. Nowadays the whole one and united family joined in one way or another, one at a time in the festivities. Only one other critter save Lili and Oscar could humanly scrunch into her bathroom though bathr might be a better way of spelling it. Leaving out a couple of Os and that pesky M it was so tiny. And with that mighty seaquarium fish tank in there she had to close the door at that just to move anywheres near the tap.

Now it was Suzies turn in the bathroom. Suzie was a meeowin - talking for real mind you - looking into everything - settling in for quick a nap in the cool of the pink pink bathtub - nosing the odd invisible something in a dark corner or so. Mostly, through all this activity, this being a cats cat, she was keeping an eye, alas, on you-know-who. And there was wont Lili could do about it She kept a blue eye on Suzies while Suzie kept a green eye on Oscar.

Lili launched into another of her you two should learn to get along missives. The relationship between Oscar P. (for Pursued) Gourami Poisson and Suzie D. (for Determined) Chat (part Siamese) was one of mutual and eternal vigilance. On Lillians part it was a situation of loving watchfulness and the constant possibility of swift intervention. To be frank, Lili, bless her heart, suspected Suzie, bless her heart, of harbouring secret intentions. Even from the very first day of Oscar(god protect his little soul)'s arrival on the scene.

On Oscars first day home she found Suzie, paws sopping, crouched, the very image of predation at the edge of marineworld. Oscar, perturbed to say the least, was as deep down below as he could get, churning up a veritable cauldron of frightful agitation. That very day, cat under arm, Lili dashed to the faithful pet shop (recipient and repository of a go good deal of her precious earnings) purchasing a secure glass cover for Oscars aquarium.

Lili, as she wiped the algae from the little sunken castle, came to the end of the lecture. Suzie looked up expressionless at least to us. What was in fact transpiring between Lili and Suzie we'll never be sure of. Then Suzie reclined in full cat splendour issuing forth a yawn which Lili took to indicate agreement but which we may interpret as a statement of some contempt of court. You see a few nights ago Oscar was lucky because Susie was bad again. Lili was still a little wary. Suzie remained out of sorts more from another failure than from any rejoinder.

In that bathroom - all asides -Lilis guard did not waiver. Nor, it must be mentioned, did those of the parties of the first and second parts whose relationship remained one of tenuous fellowship. Preserved as it where by a fine line of another's hand.

Lili upon hearing one hell of an uproar - careful to cover Oscars temporary Spumoni tub home - dashed out to the living room. I dont know how over the Niagarian roiling of the bathtub spout she couldve heard even the end of the world but hear she did the ruckus out there. And there, out there she finds Tutu attacking the TV, teeth just gnashing at the tube. And on the television was the commercial that used to make her and probably a million other doggies go doggone berserk until it was mercifully replaced.

You remember the one with the vacuum cleaners. The singing vacuum cleaners. It must have something to do with the harmonicas or Seminoles or just the look of things - who knows. But anyways Lili arrived just in time to prevent Tutu from electrocuting himself at the cord.

She snapped the channel over to Radio Canada TV in French which always seemed to instantly cure Tutu of his madness. Any other of the other channels would leave Tutu incensed for hours, growling at any musical tidbit and barking at even the least vacuum cleaner-like form, sound or implication.

Zouzou had flow from the ruckus once again into the kitchen cupboards. Where she parakeet-keeted, never being able to find her way out again, though the doors could not shut from over painting. The squoik squouiks led Lili to Zouzou's place of temporary entombment among the spices where the nativity scene from Noel was kept. It was as she reached for the door of the cupboard that the auditory equivalent of an apparition made its way through the reverberating air to her. Everything stopped. One terrific shriek came forth. Though from whom it ushered, to this day, we will never know - girl or bird or dog or cat or fish, postman outside or television in.Why that terroriffic shriek merged with an equally terrifying kersplash coming from the bathroom.

Running in, Lili passed Suzie fleeing in equally the other direction. In the bathroom she found as she had imagined in her worst moment flashing past - the ice cream bucket. Overturned. Void of both aqua and pisca - water and fish for non-latin readers. A mere piece of puddle and plastic emptiness and high nor low no sign of Oscar. Why she even checked the blessed head and it was certainly lidded at the time of the event. For she had sat there before removed from the scene of - indeed not even the shadow of Oscar - the crime.

An emotion leapt from within Lili with a passion that surprised her. Id call it angrulsion or repulger and let you figure it out. Anyways it was as fine a mix of those two base states of anger and repulsion as can be. The wings of this purple state did carry her unto Suzie unawares. Who did sit upon the chesterfield licking her craven paws, smacking finally satiated chops. That dark lightening that did move unto Lili did also catch Suzie with equal swiftness. The millions of years that not a billion purring cuddles nor a trillion lap

curled naps could cool did ignite out of the air at the odour of invisible but swiftly descending danger. The tiger in the tank of this ho housecat uncoiled and in an instant Suzie was moving where instinct sent her, this time into the very teeth of danger, its blind current gambling on surprise and boldness to win the day.

But Lili blocked Suzie with a save that stopped the blurring black cat puck that would have left the Gumper himself proud. Suzie tumbled, roiled and, turning as if inside herself, rerouted the blood flight in the only other direction that lay clear skies. Here Lili erred in further pursuit. The balcony was no palatial terrace carved from the finest marble of Italys deep soul. It was high enough to catch the breeze on the hottest summer days and used little so that it bore, despite its concrete simplicity, somewhat of a Venetian air of romantic abandonment. And Suzie knew that there always lay her ultimate and, if we are to believe the believers, his penultimate refuge. Gliding in one catacascade out the door ajar, a tingle with the age-old sense of danger averted, Suzie alighted on the very edge of creation . Lili headlong and consumed by the moment did not even consider a pause. The door burst open unto Suzie's last lair and in another instant Lili stood there watching the cat that soon was fall down, down, down.

Glided a little over by the gale, falling into the grass, Suzie emerged miraculously unscathed tearing towards the street and the greater beyond. Lili perceived the convergence and intersection of circumstances - notably a black Cadillacs swift course and the cats blind rushing path - averting her eyes.

A fate befell Suzie that was swift, gory and I hate to admit it befitting the crime. Eyes reapplied to reality Lili did spy Suzie laid out there where the automobile did laid her down perhaps in this realm stilled. But the vision of Suzie forever in pursuit of Oscar in that other kingdom arised in Lilis minds eyes immediately as it should in all of ours minds eyes. And this time, she hoped, Oscar, with the good Lord looking on, would eternally avoid Suzie's catty maws.

Anyways that's how the feller down at the pet cemetery put it to our heroine in so many words. Among other things and so on. That was his first and I dare say last same such dual funeral. He had suggested an exhumatory autopsy for Oscar from Suzie's stomach. Hoping to glean a few more gruesome dollars from the affair. Which proposal of course did he swiftly withdraw observing Lili's disgust, burying the suggestion in that black flower eloquence even animal morticians seem to have mastery of. Lili, being grief stricken (and suddenly regained of her hearing) but no ghoul, balked severely at the proposal, stating in no uncertain terms that she wished to see them go into eternity thus united. Thus the sermons contents.

The cunning devil of a furry undertaker figured during the sermon of melodious gloom his profits minus expenses which where minimal at a cool five

hundred - an princely sum for a cat funeral and a fishes wake in thes {e days and more so then. That would put him black in the back as it were. Where a nice bottle lay awaiting to tide him over the long dry spells between animal deaths and their deranged owners arrivals. Sometimes he had to bite his tongue and others wonder but this time he just played the role and rolled the roll that filled his threadbare pocket as the words rolled out of his slippery mouth.

Walking home from the Little Friends of Assisi, Saint graveyard eyes downcast. The last malodorous words - Magna cum laude, et tu pluribus unum, cavaete emptor ... a-may-en. - of Brother Jerome rang through the silence hollodius in Lilis ears. She led Tutu home in a heavenly funked blue daze. Tutu was not visibly affected by all the fuss. Excepting the old, funereal black collar Lili dug out from his suitcase for sad occasions like this. The last time it was brought out was for her Tan te Cecils best friends husbands brothers memorial service (because they never found the body really, just a pair of shoes). Tutu, being an almost intelligent pooch in a doggie sort of way regarded things in a light that had hardly changed. Except that Lili was silent, a nice change. And changed for the greater, brighter and better everything appeared for today and the time being. He was almost loose, the next thing to being free. In the great outside world of his nature or at least close enough. The chain and straining collar were all that lay betwixt him and bliss and he was doing his best to overcome these restraints. Being an apartment dog the smells and wild odours of the long walk home was just about at the point of being overwhelming. This fluffy canine dragged. And whined and pulled and ran. And where Lili just a tad more fragile or Tutu a tad larger like as not her armd been wrenched clean clear of its socket. She bore the brunt of the onslaught in her gloom without notici ng or caring. The pace was so sombre that a whole dogs lost lifetimes experience was going on and on at the end of that frayed sad collar. Here and there and here and everywhere and across again there went a little wet black nose sniffed, snoofed, snootied and occasionally snorted.

Passing the place, where on the way in - in the pet cemetery limousine - Tutu nearly had a total coniption, Tutu had a coniption. You see somewheres nearby was a bitch very much in the heat of summer. And, sorrowful Sunday or no, Tutu was not about to let the opportunity of a miserable lifetime pass unchallenged. Now, mercifully, Lilis path and thereby Tutus led towards the sweet love smell - the Mary of Tutus desiring if I may so blaspheme. Tutu clawed, and Tutu whelped and Tutus eyes nearly popped out of his wee head straining to see around the corner bushes to where heavenly female canine companionship pro bably just lay there awaiting him somewhere. On silk sheets too - in a pengnoir or whatever.

But Tutu was not alone in his amorous mission. Coming quite the other ways, through the gap in the bushes that lay just at the bend of the sidewalk came Destiny. At least thats how well refer to it. Destiny having just

been released from damned penury for a daily poop an a pee on some unfortunate neighbours lawn naturally made a beeline to his Stella. Coming upon our little party, Destiny stopped bolt still. Stopped there in full, terrific, flushed and wanton doghood - stood one black hulking vision of menace - the king of pooch bullies of these here parts in his entirety. His mutt mind had been more than equally overcome having been subjected to loves pull for days as opposed to Tutus scant minutes. He noticed nothing. Some sort of sex daze had him and he wasn't about to let it him go for a mirage. Tutu froze unable to make out what this black thing could be. The Monster dog looked down, puzzled. He seem ed to laugh when he understood it was some sort of dog. Proud, cocky - for he had many a time encountered these pipsqueaks - Destiny knew their mete. From somewhere deep in Tutus shallow chest a terrible minigrowl did rest and rise and startle poor Lili to look down at where that sound had come from. Just in time for her to watch Tutu lunge and see the old black mourning collar kersnap. In a frenzied recrudescence of age-old urges bred, repressed and pampered to niegh quiescence Tutu tore headlong into perdition and battle with Fidosaurus Rex. Tutu's head was just exploding withthese wild impulses.

Tutus puppy growl vanished into the charged air as nigregiantus caninus set his bloodshot eyes on the charging yipper. You see Ben - that was its real name I imagine - had not slept for several days with the flower of hot love so close. Ben uttered a deadly blood curdling grrrrr, a rumbling horrific guttural that wouldve sent the even wildest German werewolf peepeeing all t he way to the highest hills.

Lili was welded into her tracks spellbound, too terrified to do anything as the black wolf rushed the scampering Tutu. Though rush does not adequately express the speed with which he now descended upon his pesky rival. The end was quick. Lillian, utterly stonestruck, watched it all unfold in slower than slow motion. Le loup noir - as she described it all later down at the police bureau to the homicide detective she insisted on seeing - took and shook the very soul out of Tutu and then with a flick, flung Tutu at least a fathom in the air. Tutu - or rather his mortal envelope - landed, neck broken limp in a fitting bed of white flowers though not lilys, Petunias rather - also fitting. The detective explained and explained. He told her dogs cannot be charged with crimes, at least not in Quebec anyway. He told her that because she couldnt catch the dog - even though she did chase it once regaining her wits for several blocks and through many a backyard - there was no way to identify it with the owner. That they wouldnt do a door to door search even if she paid for it. That even if, by miracle, they found the owner of the culprit, all the police could do was give a four dollar ticket for not having the dog - okay murderer madame - on a leash. Two hours and a ride home in a police cruiser it took to shake sweet, neigh demented Lili out from his hair. That, she shouted slamming the police car door, was fine French Canadian justice.

Tutu followed Suzie and Oscar out of this world in style, further stressing Lilis already depleted bank account down at the Caisse Populaire. In fact depleting it entirely. This raised the plucked and painted eyebrows and insatiable curiosity of Madame Terese, the assistant manager (who lived in the next building to Lili). This was her pernicious regular pry into significant withdrawals or deposits amoung friends, acquantances and notables or accounts of anyone she even remotely knew. Which she, pernicious, did monthly. This flurry of withdrawals would fuel much gossip at the Caisse later on. Because it was an especially gossipy Caisse being the only one for many miles around I guess.

Brother Jerome's account - not one on Terese's monthly surveillance list, he being unsavoury, disreputable and worse smelly - took an opposite relationship, swelling. Uncharacteristically, putting his financial situation into the very serious black and assuring that it would stay there for some long time to come. In fact Brother Jerome even considered retirement but dismissed it quickly. So to speak anyways, while passing out on the chapel floor later that night. For the time being the oratory of Brother Jerome surpassed itself in tone though Lili scarcely noticed that his sermon, like a deck of cards, was composed of the same parts as before, merely reshuffled. Lili - spent in every way - could not af ford the limousine home Brother Jerome offered at discount. Hell that Jerome Lasourris from Trois Pistole via Kingston Maximum Security Penitentiary - offered her for half price. She could not either walk for obvious reasons. So calling a taxi ordered curtly that the driver go the long way home. Kind of a shock to the old thief. Who was goin' to go that way anyways. Lili wanted to stay far away from and around the scene of the crime as geographically and economically possible.

Tutu. Suzie. And Oscar. Home? For Lili what was home? The more things change... they say? How greatly, dear reader, had things changed. In the space of mere hours did not life turn over for Lili? Home??? Emptiness. Shallowness. A Shreeking, hellish skreeking emptiness screeched out as she finally opened the sorrow dampened door of her once oasis - now desert. And the world around her was removed even of all interest, visions of the bleakness and blackness a nd barrenness of everything washed up on the rotten beaches of her mind.

But there, before her eyes, forgotten Zouzou- O mon dieu! Oh my god - pouvre Zouzou - poor Zouzou!! So long caged! On the utter avian edge. Lili rushed to the cage like the dessert wanderer to a glass of sweet ice tea. Zouzou clung to his perch in a limp exasperated yet frantic sort of way, shreeking at the top of his little lungs all the while water, seed and clean newspaper where being dashed cagewards. Gobbling and tipping back the leau Zouzou almost regained her normal burring self there before Lilis now not so devastated eyes. Zouzou revived - almost - the downcast spirits of this day of shades.

But almost was not, tragically enough. Lillian contemplated deep matters opening all the windows on that unseasonably hot day. As she opened the balcony doors to let the breeze tug at the curtains she contemplated opening other secrete doors and windows best left closed. Lili, sleepless, restless, she hadnt eaten i n how long? Lillian Marie Ste Amour circled around the very bottomless pit of contemplative self-immolation. Careful, mind you, never to get too close to any of them tentacles that grab and hold on and only let go when its too late. Just close enough,though, to get misty eyed and even more forlorn.

Zouzou - a bit odd mind you - but spirits definitely revived - fluttered about the room. She finally and for once simply landed on Lilis hair. Which had grown long again in the past months of lost wonderment. This may just have been the sunlight to tip the scales towards relative but by no means happiness.

Lillian saw the event as a brand of salvation from an unholy end which we all knowed was a long ways off but which anyways appeared possible.

She loved Zouzou. Now all the more - tripley more with the losses she had. This thoughts run of sadness Lili had experienced in her family brought a sob to her. Zou-zou - aflush with life and turning the tide of sorrow - flew up eto the lamp to poop, somewhere where she had never even let alone flown before - having acquired and now lost the fear of the infernal thing. This Lili interpreted as a sign that things where unchanged in their just previous happiness The sun, lowering to the uneven horizon tangle of trees, houses and clouds cast that magical filmakers light over the world. The world of Lili that had almost - theres that merciful word again - had almost been destroyed. Coming out of the kitchen, where she had disposed of the parakack, Lili stopped to take in the half panorama the small picture window offered her of a sunset setting over this little corner of La Belle Earth. Where peace - even a broken peace was better than chaos.

There little blue Zouzou, perky on the sofa, looked outside. Intently. The television silent and cool. The narrow neatness of the living room, 0 the beautiful platitude of the Saviour still on the cross looking very much up. The aquarium, full, clean but empty of life - a sort of reminder and symbol. The picture of her Mere over the fireplace that is just a few plastic logs with a light bulb in them. The curtains she sewed from lace that her grandmere gave her. The window, shiny in the twilight. Zouzou perched now on the balcony edge looking in and downright green in the golden sunsetlight.

Oh Zouzou. Lili sighed.

Screekscreek... Came the reply from the sofa inside where a blue Zouzou sat squerking on.

"Scree-scree" The green enigma replied.

Lilis eyes leapt back and forth from the Zouzou on the couch to the parakeet figure on the balcony with the calls and counter keetcalls. There she beheld a blue Zouzou there on the divan and, on the bal _cony, the Green Zouzou, who now creeechcreeeched continuosly to her blue Zouzou who perked her head this was and that curiously. Lili's head knocked incredulous back and forth several times afore she was sure that there was indeed two Zouzous and not that she had gone around the bend. Make that one Zouzou, blue, there on the couch and one non-Zouzou, green, there on the balcony - a true miracle! Prayers unprayed answered! A new family member.

Zouzou gazed into the eyes of the green Svengali evidently on the balcony and he at her. and Lili, misty eyes, at them both. Three thoughts. Raced around. The room. From being to being. To being. In the fraction of a split second. The three creatures in the room experienced a veritable cross species telepathic storm which happen so rarely if it occurs at all.

One mindthing was shared by the three minds of our two old and one new friend - I figure either blown in on a gale or an escapee or maybe just a vision though real it was for all there to see.

And well never know if it was Lilis motion to shut the door, her blue Zouzous impulse to wing, or green Monsieur Zouzous panic alighting that occured first. After the one-mind happened. Or had it all occurred simultaneously? Lili's Blue Zouzou dashed a rocket blur for the door crack that was diminishing with every millisecond as Lili shut it. Mister Green Zouzou for the wild sky further than yonder beat it. And in that seconds fragment between a messy death and freedom forever Zouzou slipped between the door and the frame to join Monsieur ZouZou in a race to the sun. Where they disappeared merging as a black dot and then gone. Invisible. No more. Fin. Caribbean bound I figures and whos to blame them.

The door slamming shattered more than the glass of the picture window. And the tiny porcelain figurines on the little table below it. Lili. Watching the birds vanish into Gods days end. Lili. Hearing the horror of the glass fragmenting as her very soul. Lili. Ushered an instinctual sound. Lili - tears streaming, blazing down her neck - Lili. still standing standing still. It is dark pitch dark suddenly. Lili began to weep. And wept deeply, deeply. Maybe until she drank dry the brine of tears and then the very voice of collapsing sorrow failed falling to naught.

Dark, florid, insect wings and bat webs beat all around as the weeping sank to her feet and crawled up again reborn, swelling the sails of despair again and again till she could weep no more and dry wept, voiceless, wailed. A slash of light broke in from the opened door, though to Lili the light could

just as well come from within as from the hall. And all around her everything was broken glass. Lili stopped.

Lili was looking into the withered face of fat eye missing garbage cat Madame Lourdes from next door. Who, shivering in terror, had worked up enough courage to go in and check on what had happened in the three hours that had passed. That and her husband, an alley-puking mongrel, had come home courageously tanked but not enough to beat her mouth shut.

But Lili saw only what was there. A twisted truncated face of a woman old before her time. A face that steamed cigarette smoke with every dirty word she shouted in Lilis face. The husbands shrivelled face and crooked brown teeth holding the flashlight as it shook.

In Lilis eyes the beam seared. And everything small, ugly and broken glass. Empty and dead and nothing around her save these people objects and these shattered things. In the pain and an explosion of more glass plate of water and rocks and more glass Lili ran. Lili ran. Madame Lourdes had in panic - when Lili recoiled from her offered janglinghand - lashed out clawing on Lilis face five clean grooves that poured blood where ere she ran. Blood pats down the hall and stairwell. Blood on the big door and drops down that neat path. Blood splattered all along the street that led into another street into another lessening. Till there was no blood. And even no crumbs to lead the children back.

Amid ocean a storm struck as out of the blue. It set the ship again and again on the brink of the deep depths and a watery death for one and all. The sheet and girders took as fierce a pounding as anyone could recall experiencing knocking even the barnacles free from the rusting hull. It was utterly topsy turvy. When the load shifted, mercifully on what was the gales last fury, the crew felt the bolt of true terror pass through from one to one. There is no sound like death for all.

Steaming at two knots, limping for port and listing badly, the Vanoord was bought and sold four times ending up reflagged and rerouted. And then the sailing orders two days from Halifax was again changed to Montreal. Long before tasting the sweet Saint Lawrence waters the mood aboard had soured. Rumours flew among the two score now inmates of this now maritime chattel. Rumours - being the radio man Jrgen spouting in his booze - that we was to all be put off in old Montreal and the good ship no more scrapped. Also, along with it, all our hard earned financial owings. The men were angry lets just say. Angry.

Bina the cook made what was to be remembered as the worst meal of an illustrious career. His famous stew became a memorable sharks lunch as no-one had heart nor stomach to swallow it.

Except for Gaston. The lone Frenchman onboard and a Quebecker to boot. Though he was, as was we all, ill pleased about the pecuniary side of the recent news. That we were heading for Montral was the best news Gaston had received since hearing of his at long last divorce from Maria the Peruvian whore. That he had wed lets just say in a state of impairment. Rather annulment than divorce as the poor sot had - and before witnesses no less - failed in his marital rites somewhat miserably.

Gaston ate alone that mealtime and with all watching (his particular curse). He helped himself to seconds and praised Cookie to what was generally held - even Cookie had to admit it - to be unrealistic heights. Gaston was happy to say the least not only to be going home but to be driven right to the front door so to speak.

But he was not a happy frog (as he called himself) when during general debate - melee would be a better term - on the issue of restitution for our labours, up Gaston jumped and shouted Mutiny!. Everyone hushed Gaston but it was on everyones mind anyways.

It was early the next morning that the Captain calls me up to his quarters. Now I dont know how it was that I was elected to the post high and honourable of crews representative but so it was. I guess because it was me that told them that wed just have to strike and let the dam bucket rust to the bottom if thems rumours didnt die a timely death.

The boys cheered - the Pakistani engine room crew a little later than the rest. Through some difficulties in interpretation their little brother encountered. And he was their guide if only in the English speaking world. He was the lowest man on the tote among the grease and grime and deafening noise. In fact he was the one they sent into the cylinders They were an interesting bunch. Six brothers who had infiltrated the ships engine rooms one by diligent one till it was theirs. They held the balls of the ship so to speak and at first we thought they were opposed. But that was only from Junior's translatory lag.

When the Captain answered my knock he was a little peaked even for the whitest of Englishmen. Rumour had it hed been dunked and dragged earlier in his spotted career on the merchant marine and darned near drowned too. Rumour being Second mate Blakey who had blabbed that on that same occasion as Jrgen blabbed. Coincidently while we was all sitting on my bunk them polishing off my fine liquor and the last of it too. Looked like something was on the good Cappins mind.

He sits me down and pours me some old cut bottle Scotch and looks me in the eye. Before hes had a chance I leap up and say that we arent about to be bilked of our just rewards, Christians or not. He says back that he

doesnt know of what I speak.

I says oh yes he does and that wed better see the cracking of that fine safe there and the dispensing of some well deserved cash and before we so as inkle land at that. Or hell be sorry. Just sorry was what I said, what I think did it.

And I up and about face and leave. Not one drop touched of that fine alchohol too. Something that drew comment at that. Not one hour did pass. Before the word passes. That this old tub is to be hauled off, busted up and melted into nails and rails and washing machines. And thats about as close to waters the stuff of our home away from no home would come for a long time to come. Abd that - two days from port - were to be paid and then put off this bucket forever.

Word being that the Captain Himself marches into chowtime and announces this all and squashes all them unfounded rumours that were so true just hours previously. The paymaster appeared - wraith of numbers and ghost of the account books - as if from the walls of the little room with the bars on the window, busying himself for his hour in the sun of all the countless thousand hours he spent alone, pale, friendless and aloof.

The line of men formed well before the appointed hour. Pay would continue most of the night as watches changed. Only the Captain was not to be seen in the extremely animated kew and rumour had it he was blind drunk unconscious. Well those last odd hours in the living life of the old ex-supply ship HMS Iroqouis was a little wild down below as the watches carried on unabated above. There was a few fights and some lost it all before we even took on the port pilot. Now I might confess to winning a little more than my share if it wernt bragging and there is no ways you could corroborate this evidence.

And I could confess to winning a few of them fights too but that would be indecorous of a mariner that had decided to retire then and theres. As soon as I held wind of the machinations of the owners by ways of that scummy fish of a Captain.

And I could say too that pulling into harbour and the bustle of another great port that I had a vision of a sad and lonely future for a not so old bowlegs like myself. With just enough taste of the passing free life of the old days, vanishing in the wind. Not enough to stop me from an early retirement from the sea.

Clearing customs, with a fine small fortune tucked in my duffle. I will honestly say that, bidding a warm farewell, I was the first onshore and therefore offship, bandy gams and all.

It was then and there and where and when that the skies opened up, as they say. And the great silent hand of moving shone on down. I sometimes thinkwhat would have happened if I had been second or last or hadn't parted those salt worn and sorry steel decks at all. What a sorry life I would have had and she to.

For there, looking like she had come from the wildest wilderness, there she was. The first sweet land sight that filled these weary happy eyes She lit me to glory blaze right from the boots up to my twisted cap. My heart pounded and my loins stirred in a definitely un-Christian like manner.

I moved me to her, she almost running me over with the weirdest of looks and fair hair even wilder in the light of the lone lamp-post that illumined the pool of land at sunsets end of the gangway to the continent of land. We started walking together.

I think I was more afraid than her. No-one said nothing. We just looked at each other now and again. And we had to stop for something. I felt my legs move a little more toward her and all of a sudden her face wide open wild welled up in my eyes. A look later. We kissed like kids in the park and in a love tangle, tangled there under the streetlight in the quiet of a weekday night kind of quiet.

We cloved together without so much as a word passing. I dont often believe in these love at first sight tales not being a one for inventing and stories. But so it was.

She took me by the arm and she just led me off, pulling along, evidently knowing just where we were going. Me all the while asking her name and wheres she going and from and so on, fool me. Trying to hold a respectable conversation like. As if talk really mattered one damn bit under the stars and the moon which were swirling over head.

I finally had to hold her arm and stop our headlong rushing nowhere and ask her name.

Lili.

Lili.

Never a more Tahitian night was spent by man and woman. A pair unblessed and un-spliced mind you in the eyes of Church and Pulpit - but god-meant for each other somehow. Just as our Muslim brothers and sisters may part by saying the mere words in each others presence so to, I believe, our own unions can and truly be made. Even if the words are never said.

Because I didn't figure out - dumb lovespelled lunk that I been - until mornings wondrous light had fully dawned, that Lili and me despite being fully strangers never more - and not a long time strangers at all - didnt speak not one word of the same spoken language. But we all know what words

are. The merest of whispers in the infinity of timeless eternity. The insignificantest of insignificances in the face of forever then and there, of the love a mere mortal man and a mere mortal woman - of here and now and when and where and everything.

And clove we did, hid away for those endless days in that little Hotel somewhere that isn't anymore I'm sure. Love growed upon us with each second spent breathing the same air and sharing the same bed and holding the same flame between us.

Laughing, Lili called me Al when I said Alouisius. That was that and Al I am even though the world and everyone else knew me by Louie. And I called her Lili. She made it be known that she had no-one and nothing and I made the same be known to her. Exceptin what I had - an old house an a few acres on Cape Breton. That my old Dad left me and aint worth a darn too - or more than anything dependin on who you are. Or arent.

And when I showed her a picture of the old place the next thing I know and shes pulling my arm and we're out the door everything in arms. And shes calling a cab and he starts heading somewhere.

I ask him wheres he going and he says trains. Trains! I say hang on. So she gives me hell in French and the guy doesnt know what to do, stop or go. I try and tell her she needs a dress or two. She doesn't understand.

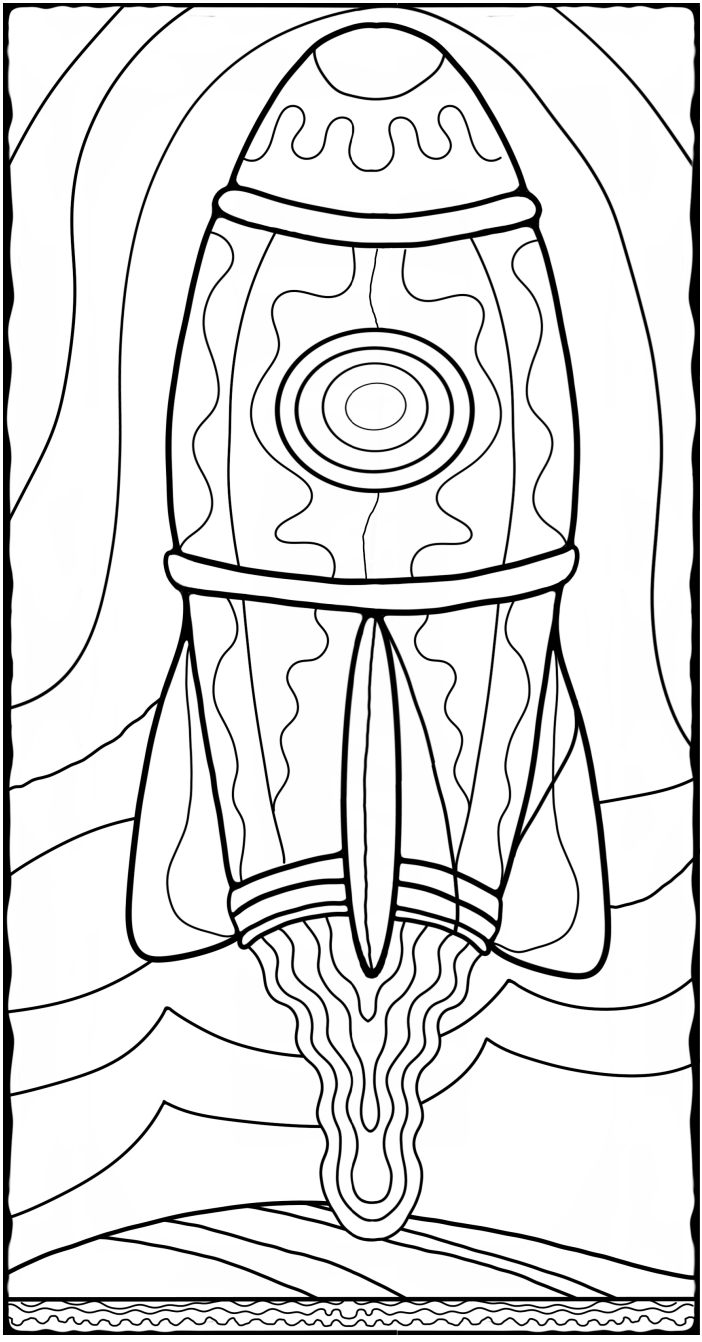
I point to the store windows. Non non non. I make like I have a dress on and am looking in the mirror and paying money and all for it. And she understands. On the next train going out East she fell into deep sleep. Like she hadnt slept in years. I opened the berth, laid her down and kissed her cheek thinking to myself about just what had happened. Saying to myself not to think. That it was enough to be true and I pinched myself good just to be sure. I do sometimes still wonder. About what would have happened if I had turned my head this way or that way instead of the way I did. If I had kept marching to nowhere or if she had kept wandering too. About the sun and sky and nights, about what happened in those lost crevas weeks after her world I told you of fell all to dead and, so it was, to life again. About things that run deep under, in and over us.

We strayed from the home we made only once. Going down to Boston to visit the grandkids a while back. And the story I gave at one sitting? Dont think it came out that way.

She'd never speak of those days before. Except whispered in my arms under the counterpane on a long night. Where hearts open and wounds heal and the moon moves across the room to rest on her like its doing just now as I'm leaving you and she's leaving me. To wonder about the great maze of fate and blind love and the curious pattern of life wherever you are, wherever Lillian may be, rest her soul.

End.

ROCKET



John Johnson

There are a million John Johnson's in this USA Today world. It's like going to the Punjab to find your friend Singh - let's just say it's not going to happen if you do. Where identity hits commonality comes befuddle-duddlement. And in AMERICA by magnitudes.

See... the question here ain't how much wood could a woodchuck chuck if a woodchuck could chuck ... the question is how could you tell one woodchuck from the next woodchuck if they all had the same name. Which they does.

Solution? Middle names. John Johnson has put that P. in the middle there to differentiate himself from all the other rascals. And that P. helps preserve his woodchuck identity even if he can't and they can't and even if there really are still a million John P. Johnson's who don't use that P. like our one in a mill does.

John uses that P like a weapon. It stands for "Porteous" for christ sakes. But like no-one knows that. Everybody assumes it means Peter or Paul or some christ-like thing like. But it's Porteuos. Freaking un-christ-like Portoues - or however the fuck you spell that s-pile. It explains everything. As middle names often do.

Dressed in a blazer with nautical airs and grey flannel pants, penny loafers (with a penny in the slot - no shit - and little leather tassles). A white polyester short sleeve shirt open at the collar of course.

John P. Johnson totes a briefcase the size of one of most matching luggage sets. One of those most expensive briefcases on earth briefcases. One of those I've spent a lot of money on for this rigid piece of dead cow type briefcases. It's a wonder he don't leave the price tag on the way it's leatherette is brandished about.

Inside that pricey slammer is a lovely, much more EXPENSIVE notebook EXPENSIVE computer connected to an EXPENSIVE cell phone (this is the year 2000 after all!). Which mean that J.P.J. is connected to the glorious Internet a) twenty six hours a day, nine days a week, three hundred ninty nine days a year. Or b) until his batteries run down. Whichever comes first. (Hint: It's b)).

Unfortunately all of the above just doesn't fit together somehow. Like those picture games kids have. Where funny people are cut in three and you mix and match for even more funny kinda lookin mix-ups. John's shoulder up looks like the pivotal computer nerd. Dorky glasses, dopey moustache, dumbo ears (think Prince Charles), sloped shoulders and a genuine sense that perhaps Picasso/Bracque really did understand some human faces in

their cubist co-phase.

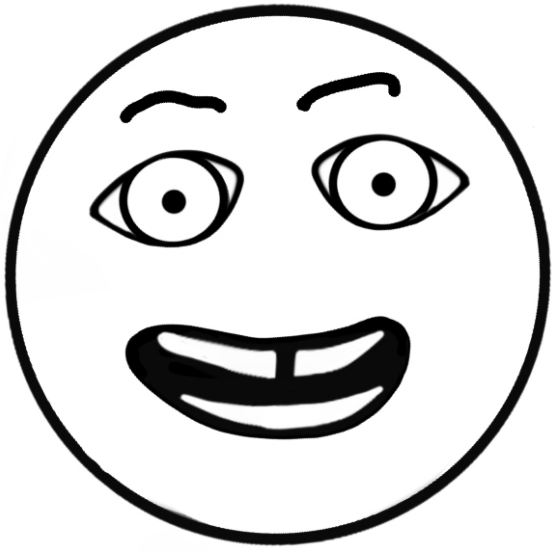
That middle section! Under the clubby blazer, is that of wine conniesoor, a vintage belly sticking out round and tubby like it was sewn on. Only that Buddha-bowl was fer real pardner. Watching JPJ eat, shovelling great fork-fulls of chow down, proved the reality of the girth. You'd almost say the chap was pregnant if we didn't worship life and women and the beauty of gestation. Let's just leave the middle half as being Santa Claus of the Yacht club set.

The legs down part is perhaps the oddest segment of this composite Johnson picture. Bowed and stick like them there legs could have belonged to a goat. Or an ostrich. Or both. Poking out between Argyle sock and pants those two skewer legs looked like they couldn't quite support the weirdly ungainly rest. They looked like they would snap under the contradictions of John P. Johnson. Snap and leave him frantically trying to log in somewhere, somewhow and E-Mail for an ambulance. Or animal control.

No-one knows what John P. Johnson does. He is "An Internet Consultant". One of the hundreds of "net.personalities" who seem to sustain a living from the air. Perhaps they have inheritances. Perhaps they are on pensions or have trust funds or who knows. They populate the Internet "culture" like squirrels in parks... always somewhere... not too far off. Looking for peanuts. Running from anything remotely predatory. Even if that’s a two year old or a gust of wind lifting leaves. In another word: chicken. Still more: chicken shit.

And on the Internet the peanuts this Johnson squirrel is hunting for is is moolah, clams, dough, cash, money, Money, MONEY!!!

See John P. Johnson *had* money. Lots and lots of money. His Lexus gleamed and references to this or that company peppered his discussions like most people’s insufferable children. Ne'er a more unselfconscious corporate name dropper exists alas. And lunch with Johnson left one dizzy. As if one had been fed newspaper stock market results somewhere along the line and never really realized it. Waking with a jolt at the meaninglessness of it all. Of the world of John P. Johnson. But that money was likely in the past as much as the ever receding future. Though he did seem to continue. Seemingly without evident means of support.



Dr. Hook

Dr. Hook smoakes. The cigarette nailed to his lip is a perpetually glowing smug pot casting it's stink where ere Dr. Hook goes. Dr. Hook has a name. Everyone knows his name. He wears black leather everything and smoaks. Dr. Hook has this this about the bottum, the slime, the low down and the plain down low. His server churns out what he calls anal-tainment... enjoyment derived from plunging into the butthole of the electronic universe. Nice work if you don't gag and puke. It was his world, his sewer, his anus his head was firmly lodged in. Seemingly without end or knowledge as to what he was exactly looking at after all. Dr. Hook.

Fax Man

Faxes writhe onto the floor one by one in seemingly endless cascades. Paper rolls empty and in the morning a pile of senseless ramblings await daily vanquished civil servants across the province. Dr. Fax and his mission were simple: to empty the government of all fax paper. To drown the evil powers that be in an unending storm of faxes. All night. Every night. For this was his vengeance. And vengeance was mine sayeth the smelly Dr. In his lab coat, pens and black horn rim glasses. An insane smile pasted to a deranged face. Spouting anti-establishment nonsense while unleashing his after dark blizzard of faxes. Only burying hapless civil servants, over-burdening receptionists and mail room clerks with their already busy days... adding more and more and more paper. Confronting avalanches of faxes as a good morning every day.

Miserable Schreiber

A Cautionary Tale of Days Long Gone (?)

A man directs a dirty boy in putting up a square table covered by an awning. He is screaming to get the urchin to place it in the shade of a tree in the square of this town on this blooming, sunny morning. The boy is almost in tears. If Schreiber could just talk it would take half as long and be a hundred times more pleasant. But Schreiber is Schreiber and it is market day.

The sun is new and soon there will be hundreds of people milling about the carts and makeshift stalls of produce that are gathering. And there is Schreiber, sore, smart thumb amidst the riot. Chicken vie with pig'n'poke, rabbits strung on sticks, lambs bleating - you can almost hear a Tiger's roar though chicken's chucking, cows cowing, potatoes potating, turnips turning though the whole Medieval cornucopia unfolding there under the strengthening heat is very far from Oriental mystery.

Except for our friend under the awning. What is this man selling? Something as old as buying a fuck. There is nothing on his table. Except a large plumed feather hobnailed into a board. He unwraps a roll of parchment as a couple, beet red in the face and hats in hand shuffle from foot to foot before him.

I can't quite make out what they're on about... but a crumpled yellow sheet is flattened on the table. The man Schreiber sitting, dressed marginally better, sets a sturdy glass ink well beside the paper - and sets to work. The scribe. Writer. Town man of letters when letters could really make a man. That is Schreiber.

He questions the bumpkins. Some bickering ensues between the peasants. A snapped comment shuts them up and Schreiber (not his name but what they call him) continues to write.

Then he finds what is evidently a utility plume and thrusts it at the yokels - they burn red at the profered tool and both look at it as if Schreiber had pulled his cock onto the table.

Schreiber instructs them in the art of the X and an X goes down on the parchment. Folded and sealed. Then coins pass. The red faced ones go away.

By the time this transaction has concluded there is a long line-up in front of Schreiber. A long line-up of money for the orphaned boy of a once wealthy family who learned only this - writing - his one and only skill (I guess reading makes two) in the brief life of near privilege before the fall. Before his family lost it all and Schreiber was reduced to this.

Schreiber grumbled to himself - not too loudly mind you. He had been subject to too many pranks and may have learned a little reticence if not the secret of silence. But he couldn't help hisself and grumbled never the less.

Sometimes the children would hide out and try and hear his grumblings. So naturally everyone in the valley knew that Schreiber conceived of them as pigs or worse. And everyone laughed when the more cunning of the boys would make Schreiber fall in the shit or drop into some huge hole or ditch or some nasty contrivance or other.

However and regardless. They needed each other. So any really rough trick was frowned upon. The farming folk of this little valley needed miserable Schreiber and, if he ever came out from under his cloud of anger and disappointment, miserable Schreiber would have realized he needed them just as much.

They - townsfolk and their scribe - were, alas, bound. Schreiber bound by poverty. The people tied to this shit of a man by exactly the same reason. At the end of market day Schreiber's hands where as black (with ink) as Schmidt's hands was black in the soot of the forge or the farmer's hand with the good earth. And the labour of this day? A hundred and seventeen letters, wills, accusations, court pleas and the assorted and sorted business of the village and near hamlets and corners had been dealt with.

Schreiber miserably screamed at the boy who dragged the table away. And walked into a hidden bucket of swill on his way home. The next morning that made the rounds of the watering holes to the amusement of all.

You can be sure the only one person who did not hear was - Schreiber. Who was far too busy lamenting his lost privileges, forgotten minor titles and non-existent existence. Dreaded market day would come soon enough. And there were always knocks at his door to begrudgingly answer at all hours of his miserable days. Oh, the price of brilliance in all this ignorance!

GETTING TO KNOW UU

The room breathed technology and money. In the glow of a hundred significantly flashing little red lights, in the dimness, in the hum of fans and the pulse of a heck of a of a lot of boxes that looked like computers the room spoke POWER. Orange cables, blue cables, striped multi-colour cables snaked into a false floor - you could see it all where a young fellow was working under there on some black box or other. All that bright spaghetti exposed with the panels lifted up was impressive.

The cops' mouths dropped open when they were shown the techno spaghetti. None of these flat foots had EVER seen so many wires in one place. To tell the truth it would be the only thing they would remember of the visit. Wires. Pretty colour. Wires.

Behind an always locked door, in this room, was the central computer of UUJET ... pronounced You-You-Jet. And UUJET just happened to be the biggest and the baddest big boy computer communications Internet Services Provider (ISP) in all of of the whole gosh-darned nation. In people talk it means UUJet sells information. UUJet sells the Internet. UUJet "hooks" your computer to the world network of computers. For a price.

A way up there on the 18th floor of the Daily News Tower UUJET pulsates POWER. Giga-bucks of POWER. Sheer big, bad POWER.

The millions of people out there in the sprawling city don't even know it exists. Countless other even more face- less millions out there in tiny towns all over nowhere couldn't even imagine UUJET. Each and every one of them doesn't know that most of their banking, government and other sensitive, personal and every other kind of information comes right through these UUJET coloured wires. And gets sorted out in them boxes and lights. Among other things.

If they knew what went through UUJET the place would be armed like Fort Knox. But no-one know and really cares. It's just a bunch o'numbers, eh? Why a bucket of water and a squirt gun jammed in a pocket gangster style and any old one could shut down all those numbers for a month from UUJET. Heck they could shut down the country for a month from right here. All them wires and nice, steel boxes and flashing lights and one bucket of water could send it all up hisssing. Weeks later things would get back to normal all-right. But weeks later billions of dollars of losses would have resulted from my bucky of mere wa-wa.

All those bank accounts and credit card transactions, stock trades and personal information up in a cloud of vapour and smoke. All this and more right here before the eyes of three nervous cops in suits and UUJET's nervous President Knute Knutesonn.

UUJET looks like just another office from the hallway. Right next to some scam pollster outfit, down the hall from a corporate lawyer type. Walk into any one of these places and the first room is always the same. A receptionist entombed in an over-illumined windowless flourescent hell of buzzing lights. Ms. receptionist is forced to be friendly no matter how fucking dreadful her fucking dreadful existence. She friendly's you in and friendly's you out. She would fucking friendly Attilla the Hun wielding a broad axe or freaking Ghengis Khan swinging a decapitated head spewing recent gore in each hand. It's her job you see.

The only difference at UUJET is ... that this eponymous receptionist is stationed behind what must be the world's largest secretary's computer screen. You can't really see her behind the monumentalness of that machine hoisted on her desk. All you see is a puff of hair and then you have to cran over or peek to the sides - and there she is.

"Hi. Welcome to You-You Jet. Can I help you?"

Well I'll tell you the police were a little intimidated by it all - and more so by the brief tour UUJET President Knutesonn led them on by ways of an introduction to his world. That only seemed to confuse the coppers more. Only Knute didn't realize this prescient fact.

Making their way down the UUJET hall Knutesonn talked on and on. Looking through glass walls at banks of machines. Knuteson buried them deteck-tives in complete unfamiliarity. Going in and out doorways here and there. Their po-leece eyes were buggy. Buggy. BUGGGY. Even if they were called the Corporate And Computer Crimes Investigation Unit... The men from C.A.C.C.I.U.

Knutesonn didn't sense the fact that the police just wanted to bust someone over the head, twist their arm and force a confession or something. You see the police officer's feelings of evident technical incompetence seemed to be emotionally expressing itself a little on the violent side.

Knutesonn towed the three police officers around from computer room to computer room talking away, a way over their heads. The cop's eyes where fucken buggen at the sight of all that equipment, all those computers, all that WIRING. Finally Knutesonn opened the door to a what was a more or less familiar sight - a dinghy, dirty room where overwieght men gathered - and here's where the less comes into the picture - these fat guys were gathered around another huge, very extremely large computer screen. While one of them furiously typed something on the keyboard.

"There ... He's in! nothing I could do. Son of a bitch - under twenty seconds to crack Root and do whatever the hell he's doing! I can't believe it!"

The police looked at each other. It looked like they wanted to start shouting "FREEEEZE", breaking heads open and hand cuffing everyone. But there was no perpetrator anywhere they could see. So they would have had to start cracking these kids' heads. And Knutesonn. And something told them that that was not the thing to do under these circumstances.

Still, the cops looked like four rabid Pit Bulls in a playground ready to rip the first kid who twitched the wrong way into so many pieces. And the fella's around the computer... who were not quite as oblivious to primal feelings as their boss Knutesonn... sensed this imanent possibiltity of violence in the air almost instantly. In fact as soon as they - in one motion - turned their heads to see the cops in their sanctum they knew who the bacon was. Them.

The lead cop in a Hugo Boss suit that made him look even more mesomoprhic tried to smile when he somehow figured out he and his bruisers were scarring the shit out of the nerds. It only rattled the fat young men further. Until the computer beeped a few times and all eyes - including those of the officer's of the peace - swung back to the computer. The sound was like someone had one an old video game and tore everybody's attention away from dismemberment back to computerland.

"Shit! Holy shit!" The oldest of the geeks ran his hands through thinning hair and rubbed his eyes holding his glasses funny.

"Cut him off." said another.

"But then ... he'll know we're on to him."

"Cut it now. He's in the account the Global Oil account. He changing everything. Cut him off!"

The cops look at one another. They blink furiously. Knutesonn tries to explain that this has been going on all day. All they can think is "EVERYBODY ON THE FLOOR - HANDS WHERE WE CAN SEE'EM".

"Okay. Server terminated. It's off. He'll just think that the computer is down - the system crashed." The boy at the keyboard slumps. The screen shows only the time, blinking. Jumping around the screen... 09:42:02, 09:42:11, 09:42:23...

Knutesonn looks at the sweating cops. "See there's no way to stop it happening except to turn off the computer." Steven, Svend, Billy, Borke, Freeise (the computerheads) these are officers O'Malley, Toddles and Hodgekiss. Of the Corporate Crimes Division, Metro Police. Can one of you fellas please explain what happened just then."

Steven clears his throat. The other four look like they would rather eat mag-

gots than say anything.

"Well that was the third episode this morning, the twelfth break in this week. The security analysis here-" Steven points to the screen "-shows only minor changes in the account broken into this time. The name of Global Oil's President had been changed from "Edward R. Bolle" to "Edward 4 Balls" ... following the pattern of previous account break-ins."

The cops are trying hard to listen. It's hard not to imagine them as Keystone Cops whacking each other with rubber truncheons. But no-one imagines that. They redouble their effort to listen as Steven continues...

"See only small things are changed. He changes names, "signature" files (those are the lines at the ends of Electronic messages which tell a little about the write). These things are changed to mildly obscene, offensive or insulting words and phrases. Nothing criminal - except the breaking in itself."

"The really odd thing is that we can't trace the break ins. Something seems to mask what would have been an otherwise easy electronic trail that could have been followed straight to the hacker. He changed the name of the "Root" account to something else. Once. And since then writes silly words somewhere inconspicuous."

Knutesonn looked at Steven as if to say "More. Tell these dummies more" and Steven continues...

"See "Root" is what many computer programs call the administrator's or system operator's core account. This account controls everything on any particular computer network. If you can control "Root" you can do anything. And our man seemed to be able to take control of this Root account without any trace of where they were coming from and without setting off any of the built-in warnings and security measures. And then guy changes anything he likes, anytime, on any computer system connected to the outside world in any way. If he changes "Root" to "Poot" then no-one can get in - not even the people who run the computers. Not without a great deal of effort. And if he can get in here he can get in anywhere."

"In other words we're in deep trouble if this guy somehow can't be stopped. He can even somehow force the computer to kick the system administrator off, and then just take over. Rifling through files, changing this and altering that. Very quickly too. Usually in under five minutes it's all over. You saw it."

"Thanks Steven." Knutesonn takes the cops - to everyone's relief - out of the still busy about it talking room.
Knute clears his throat and the cops all dutifully look at him. "This hacker changed the password for our system twice. For two days we had a computer where no one could get in and here nothing could be done. We had to rebuild the entire system ... 16 hours work. Times two. Another time all of the names on the system were changed to "Penis" and then the next day to 'Vagina'."

The cops stifle a laugh and cover it up by looking at each other again glancing about as if trying to figure which of the boys where the perp. At that moment it became clear to everyone that not one of the police officers has breathed a word in the half an hour they had been at UUJET. Why, at that moment, no-one knew. But they came to that understanding just then. And it therefore became necessary and incumbent of the police - to talk. To say anything. The three of them squirmed attempting to mutter an even vaguely intelligent word. In face of all this smart stuff they felt, frankly, dumb.

"Why uhhh..." Officer O'Malley stirs, clears his throat and assembled eyes focus on him "Well, that is, uhh, is this serious?" the silence is broken. The cops feel proud.

"Serious?" Knutesonn stops. "Serious! Did you see what was happening? This fellow can break-in while we're watching, change anything they choose and then disappear. Do you realize what that means? Do you guys have a computer at police headquarters? Or maybe two or three? How about modems? Well let me fil you in ... we set up your system there. And I'd be worried if I were you."

"That's serious." Officer O'Malley shuts up again. The cop's pride has transmogrified into embarrassment. After fifteen minutes in Knutesons office of awkward conversation and fact noting the police are gone. Knutesonn and the can almost imagine them running for their cruiser - maybe even rushing to the nearest violent crime to get their frustrations out on some real bad-guy. But he doesn't. Knutesonn is worried.

In fact everyone a UUJET is on edge. They didn't realize that that last bit would be their last brush with the hacker. So Knute Knutesonn had cancelled the vacation he was supposed to be on now. The five tech support co-op boys from the university were supposed to be answering the ringing phones and client's infinitely dumb questions. They weren't doing that either. Everything among the staff was upside down, UUJET was on alert and EVERYTHING was a frigging mess.

Word of hacker's crack-in had already spread far and wide in the informal and quite confidential world of network system administrators. By days end the news had spread world wide. So this unknown person was a peculiar brand of secret/famous over night. Every computer system operator had heard about it. Their private Electronic Mail correspondences were smoking with concern, fear and not a little loathing. This mysterious person had become computer geek public enemy number one. Instantly. There was even talk of formally reconvening The Cabal.

And then, the next morning, at half past ten, black screens all around. With one word emblazoned there on all their monitor tubes. It lasted just a few minutes, it was enough. One word burned into their collective nerd retinas...

Consultant Dick

The prospect of a very large account and many years of potential prosperity didn't phase Dick in the least. He was Mister Dick Barbabra, number one mainframe computer system salesman. In the nation! He had had an extra cup o' java the morning. He even went for a run. And letting his Ford Tempo idle to the correct operating engine temperature (as recomended in his owners manual) he would be ready too.

Dick's thoughts were all around the talk he would give. His proposal had been a breeze to compile. Just re-write what had been successful a hundred times before. The talk would do it.

Down the Parkway, across the 416, the city was alight with business. And Dick would have his share as his vehicle eased into the VISITOR'S spot of the gleaming suburban headquarters of one of the truely big companies in Metro - not to mention the World.

The big letters MPGC in chrome out front bespoke of power, influence and corporate life. The way the doors opened and closed, the hedges, shit the very processed air not to mention the people inside and outside acted shouted "This is one god damned important institution and don't ever forget it" - even if fully half the people didn't really understand how they could make money doing what they did or where, indeed, it came from, went to or whatever.

Most of them - the office drones - would gather at the Third Cup in the lobby and forget all about that shit to gossip breaks away on their ant-like lives. Dick saw them look at him on his way up and laughed his wry laugh as the chrome elevator silently slid shut. Proles. And there he was looking at himself - look fine. Briefcase ready. Thoughts together.

Just as suddenly the elevator doors open and he's there. "Floor eighteen" the digital voice chimes in. To the right the chrome MPGC arrow points. To the right he goes.

The meeting is in progress. Just in time delivery of one expert complete. Bruce Muller is coming out of an office with some papers... "Ah, good morning Dick! Come in. Right on time. That's what I like =- punctuality. Dick Barbara meet Stanely Krippner, New York MPGC, Sally Fields from our MPGC Orlando office and you know Deborah James of MPGC's UK division."

"Pleased to meet you." Handshakes all around and what look like looks at Dick our erstwhile expert.

There's a big banner in the office. It reads "SHARE THE KNOW-HOW" and is replete with graphics of people around the world linked by computer,

satellite, high speed lines all talking and working together in a video conference. That poster alone is worth five or six thousand dollars - what a waste.

"Well I guess it's my turn," Bruce says. Stanley, Sally and Deborah laugh. Dick smiles and looks at them benevolently. "Dick, We've digested your proposals and comments on our plans. Perhaps you can talk now in person on you thoughts and rec's?"

"Sure Bruce , it would be my pleasure. As you know I have recommended a UNIX based X-Windows operating system for your company to utilize in it's planned international telecommunications network. This means that each user in this proposal would have access, thorugh a X-Windows client SUN box to the central mainframe computers world-wide. X-Windows would let a trained operator acccess milions of files and all of the databases and information services on your central computers from anywhere in the world."

"This UNIX based system would require more training up-front than other less powerful computer systems. However the payback would be a group of skilled system operators which could, in turn, train others until everyone in the company would eventually be X-Windows and UNIX conversant."

The silence rings and his audience seems to glance at the spanking new banner overhead.

"Dick ... what amount of time would it take for the average employee to learn this X-Windows thing?"

"That depends entirely on them I'm afraid. A motivated emloyee will learn faster than another, not so motivated employee. I'd say three months for the former and maybe never for the later. But isn't that true of everything?"

Dick chuckles. No-one else does.

"Let's say we wanted to implement this system within two months, company wide. That means from receptionist to CEO. Let's say we wanted EVERYONE to participate and had to train EVERYONE to functionality." It was Stanley's kick at the can.

"Not possible. There is not a competant system available today that will let everyone utilize the tools my proposaed system outlines."

"What about those Apple products like E-Mail Works from ClearSoftware Inc? Simple to use, allows sharing of information, files, E-Mail, work and discussion groups? They claim two hours for ANYONE to learn and use it. Comments Dick?"

Dick sits a little straighter... "E-MailWorks will not allow the system operator to access all the mainframe computer's capabiltiies from any machine instantly. It will not allow access to the UNIX Shell or full Internet or database capabilities nor will it allow high speed linking capabilities of X-Windows and an trained employee. E-MailWorks is basically a low power, rudimentary tool that will exchange electronic mail, information and files between people - and no more."

"Sort of like what we want?" Deborah's comment drew all eyes toward her.

"Mr. Barbara, our initiative is intended to bring simple modern telecommunications to every one of our 40,000 plus MPGC employees. The motto is "Share the Know-How". How can we share the knowlege here if half the workers may never be able to learn any system we install?"

Dick strikes for the kill "But the other half will pick up the slack by being completely trained telecommunications operators. I mean how many people do you need to keep everyone in touch?"

"All of them, Mr. Barabara, all of them."

"I beg to disagree." Dick forges on unawares that the ground is opening underneath him. "You need a handful of highly trained operators in every department who have the full network power in their hands. The rest of the staff would use this expertise to communicate with each other."

"And what if they are sick, quit, or not quite suited for the job after all that? See we envisage every staff person being able to use any system we invest in to be able to reach every other staff person - directly, world-wide - TODAY. And yes, E-mail, information and files exchange - along with the telephone and video conferencing - is enough. For now."

Sally joins Deborah's stream of words "See if we chose a system like the one you put forward not only would we have to wait a year or two we would still not be able to get EVERONE involved. That is our goal. Everyone. Soon. In fact within six months. What Deborah said, I agree with and I think I speak for all of us here -" nods all around "- we are very serious about bringing technology down to a common, corporate wide, level."

"Thanks for your input Dick..." Bruce is standing, leaning towards the door. Dick rises feeling a little lost, legs a little jello-like. He smiles but there is nothing warm or happy in that smile. They smile but when he is out of the office there is palpable relief that Dick Barbara is the hell out of there.

On the way down Dick rolls over the events of the past half an hour. They rejected his proposal. They have settled with toy computer software and gameboy hardware too boot. Their heads would roll and he would probably

back when their little experiment folded. His smile returned smug on his face as he strolled past another, different line of coffee break vultures gawking at his departure as if it were the only notable event in that marbled corporate foyer this afternoon. It wasn't. But it might well as have been for them.

Headlines in all the computer press of the reounding success MPGC's "SHARE THE KNOW-HOW" campaign didn't phase Dick in the least. The fact that MPGC's stock sky rocketed and has since split - TWICE - didn't cause Dick to doubt himself or his judgemet in the least. Even if everyone at MPGC was in fact now in communication with everyone else - worldwide.

Dick knew that they all knew nothing. That when a competitor to MPGC took up Dick's ideas fully that the real winner would come forward. Dick's UNIX mania would be vindicated and MPGC would be conquered. And even as the previous system Dick had engineered at MPGC is being quietly and quickly dismanteled Dick Barbara has moved on to bigger and better things.

His last consultancy loss is indeed forgotten in the annals of corporate history. Buoyed by the Information Superhighway frenzy Dick Barbara's knowledgeable face is everywhere. Even if the secret that he missed the train is unknown by one and all. Even if the fact that Dick knows fuck all is only know to a very few... it's made up by the mad pin bearing rush after the Internet balloon. Dick is temporary King of the Internet fart bubble. And darned proud of it.

There along the stairs, finally assembled, the inner sanctum of The Cabal...

A faint jingling in the distance caught the crowd as a whole and then it grew louder and all could hear some music a flute trilling, drum beating, and that jingling and what seemed like "Ha-ha, tra-la, Ha-ha..." softly making its way to the congregated illuminati.

Bursting from the thick, blue velvet was a consort of small instruments and a woman naked but for a garland of flowers in her lap... and then the tra-la's and sudden ta-da-da taa da-da of trumpeters as the curtains slowly lifted.

There, silhouetted what appeared to be the outline of a Jester, a joker, like in the cards, just like in the cards only as real down to the curly pointed slippers and jingle bells. And the Jester eating up the tooting horns smiles and makes faces at no-one and everyone. The Jester opens his red mouth and sticks his tongue out at us all standing there and then simply stops, walking to the grand masters dais, plunking himself in the chair and farting very loudly.

A low murmur builds in the crowd, one of outrage and anger -

"SHUT-UP YOU ALL OF YOU!" Screams the Jester grand master. "Please?" There is a ripple of laughter - "Ahh that's what I like to hear a chuckle or three. But do fuck with your outrage ... you knew who I was all along - didn't you suspect?"

Everyone in the crowd now knows who it is and yet they seem immobilised en mass to do anything about it - not even to breathe the name of their long mysterious leader, the Cabal's secret zenith, their collective will and omnipotent director since the great re-organization. As if in discovery they lose everything.

"I" the Jester breathed a mighty sigh, "I am here tonight to say that you have been bad boys. You have always been bad boys but now I am merely saying it so there. Sue me." A hush descends. "Bad, bad boys. You have held the truth to yourselves. You haven't shared it with 'We The People'."

"I know nothing about your machines. I never have. This has been a long great joke on my part. The same joke pulled on you in reverse as to what you've pulled on sweet, unsuspecting humanity. The boobs and techno idiots and clowns are now you my box headed friends. How does it feel? Don't answer it I don't care. Like the lunatic on the race horse we shall run into the ground - Like. It. Or. Not."

"And lest you imagine to depose or do me any harm I suggest you think twice. How long would you all last if word leaked who I was and how long you had been lead by the ilk of I? Not very damn long - not that you all have much of a future anymore."

"Enjoy these last years my mensa-obsessed digit-brained followers - for I shall lead ye only ever deeper into the wilderness just deserved sayeth the Jester. Jester says though I walk among ye scorned I lead ye only away from the innocent and beguileable."

"And with a swish of my magic wand and the magical words *A-La-Ka-Bob* I bid yea all a fair-thee-ill and return to my secret ways. Obey and ye are lost. Disobey and ye are lost. Your choice my pretties - COME... the girl rises strewing flowers as the band strikes up and the procession winds it's way into the depth of the hall - suddenly the lights go out and no-one can find a switch that works

In he chaos many words usher forth but only one will everyone remember being on all lips "Allisat" was the word, the secret of the Cabal, the last and now greatest key no-one alive in the room could ever breathe but there, in the dark, to each boggled other - Allisat - Allisat - Allisat!

MONKEY man

Monkey MAN leapt from rooftop to rooftop
followed as he went by the sounds of terrified
New Dehlian howls
despite reports to the contrary
and the massed efforts of the media
to discount his existence there he was
tearing across the top the city
escaping the clamour
holding what appeared to be a doll in one arm
Only it was not a doll
it was a baby
that wailed louder than the old man
the monkey MAN had bowled over on that last roof terrace
another distorted face
seared into MONKEY man's memory
He was only defending himself.
He had saved this baby a girl from certain death
by exposure from one household
where he had found her abandoned.
Now he was going to the only place
he had ever known as home.
In the clouds there were no people.
How one gets to the clouds is not generally known.
But there the MONKEY man lived.
He sipped dew gathered from the petals
of the huge and infinitely fragrant flowers
that grew there.
Ate of their nectar and abundant fruit
for they were forever in flower, ripening or gone to sky seed.
MONKEY man climbed higher and higher
in the lush botanical garden
next to the derelict British imperial war cemetery
higher and higher
until he could no longer hear
the unending din
of the fetid city below
razor sharp claws
delicately slicing
of mango
papaya
guava
more
and his imaginary baby
in this imaginary world

LOST

When he walked into this sunset, into this sun, everything became luminescent, everything became light, everything became everything. And when he walked out of it again it was all gone, it was all night, it was very far from anything resembling home and what few people there were around him on the street were looking at him very strangely.

In a window of a store across the street he could see someone dressed in brown. Black really. Someone brown dressed in black filth, the soles of his shoes gone, standing on black bare, bleeding and broken feet. Looking back at him. As him.

There were many days he could not remember in the years that had passed. Many months that passed without a memory too. Seasons flipped old clock radio by. Seasons not so much forgotten as misplaced. Not so much misplaced as forgotten.

And he also forgot his name somewhere along the way. And his date of birth or daet fo brith as he thought of it. Forgot it completely even as the cop kicked his face in that alley somewhere in a city where there was no water and only heat. In that city where he slept lost in the grass for a hundred or a thousand or one million days. All the same. All one.

Days, months, years, decades, centuries, millennia, aeons, epochs, eras, whole universal tick tockings and big boomings had come and gone and come and gone again. And come and gone and come and gone. Whole worlds had risen and fallen, risen and fallen, fallen and risen, fallen and risen, fallen and fallen, risen and risen. Whole animal kingdoms marched passed in their evolutionary fast forward procession. Whole kingdoms of animal kingdoms. Suessian kingdoms of animal kingdoms of animal kingdoms. From when the last memory was severed to this day somewhere on the map. All had been displaced. By all this and more.

On the map it was named something. Somewhere. Five minutes (or five centuries?) earlier and it would not have existed would it? No. Suddenly there it was again.

The first thing he did was feel his teeth with his hands. The first thing I did was feel my teeth with my hands. And the shock when he felt them all not to be there anymore. And the shock I felt when I felt most of my teeth where gone. Where were they he asked? Where did they go I asked? Where are they? Scattered all over creation. All over civilization. All over the wildernesses. All over. Gone.

The second thing I did was look real close at the thing in the mirror window store front. The light of a setting sun that was rising, casting a golden or-

ange light upon a terrible sight. Me, the derelict. The Bowery bum minus the Bowery.

What had happened to me? And why did they do this to me? And where would I go now that I knew? What could I do now that it was over? Was it really over? I startled at something behind me but it was only my shadow on the wall behind. The sun now fuller and whiter in a fast blue sky. A few clouds impossibly shaped moving vapour fast towards somewhere.

There was no-one on the street and heat became more and more apparent as that sun rose, as that Earth under and around that sun spinning over and over in the void. But that was before all this came rushing back. Now there were plenty of questions. Questions rushing into hurt, colliding with pain. From my mouth. From my head - it seemed like I couldn't hold my head any way that didn't hurt. Sometimes a lot, sometimes a little, and more often excruciatingly sharply.

Questions. I would have to wash. To shave. To find clothes. To burn or bury these rotten clothes. To get dressed. To find a dentist who will work for free unless - no. No wad of thousand dollar bills in my pockets. Full of dirt amd sticks and bottle caps and pieces of garbage. No small sack of diamonds sewn into the linings of a fine suit sometime in the ninteen sixties.

Find a place to do this. Wish I was on the lake where our cottage once was. Where all I had to do was swim in the cold water. The deep black water of the lake that would clean everything. Clean to the core of my lost soul. Clean with no soap only water and wind and the smell of an endless pine forest, rocks, moss, lichen, cat tails, moose shit, wolf packs, loon pairs, black flies, dead skunks in the middle of the woods, dead skunks in the middle of the city, dead skunks in the middle of the road.

But there was no lake here. Only an increasing amount of people now. And all of the cars had Florida plates and the one right there smiles back at me. Choose life. Choose life. Choose life. OK. OK. OK. I am alive. I choose life. I am not dead. I do not choose death. I choose life. Life chooses me. OK. I'm OK.

Someone stops. Looks ino my eyes. Asks me if I'm OK. As if they've been listening to my brain, my thoughts, what I had just been saying to myself. They are impossibly tanned. Old. He has a coboy hat on, she a kerchief. Like this is Oklahoma! A couple now that I focus on them. It was the woman who asked me.

"Yes. Yes, I think so. Yes. I'm all right. Thank you. Yes."

"Are you sure?" The man asks me.

"No. No. No, I'm not sure. I'm not all right. Could you tell me where I am."

"Ocala" She says.

"Ocala Florida" He says when it doesn't register.

"Ocala Florida United States of America, Earth" She adds. And he laughs. And I laugh. I feel like I'm really laughing my head off it hurts so much and they notice.

"There's a clinic in town. It's free." The man tells me.

"I'm not in town?"

"Yes. Just more so. Down that street. A white buidling with big, blue doors. You can't miss it if you go down there. Round the corner." He pushes something into my hands that feels like paper. It's money. A fifty dolar bill. "And hush now and keep that. Been there brother. Been back too. God bless." He adds then they are gone.

I begin to weep. And my legs buckle a little and I kneel down on one knee like I remember at a fotball practice and a team picture so long ago we wore leather helmets. Only it's not my life I'm remembering. Tears and grief and the sunshine and fifty dollars and a free clinic somewhere near. In a big white buidling I couldn't miss God bless. God bless.

Life is. Life is. Life is a string of miracles and to find myself weeping there in the street as the memories of my children, my wives, my wife pregnant, the infant child my son, the memories storm out and I weep staggering through the street to the white building with the blue doors somewhere down there with fifty dollars in my fist. The tears washing dirt from around my eyes to make me look like some sort of bizaaro minstrel shower street person, homeless former mental patient, psychiatric survivor, grubby troll.

When I push open the big blue doors I find myself alone in a waiting room where not five but six nurses stand there looking at me. And two doctors. Life is. Life is a string of miracle pearls strung out between grief. Clackness, madness, horrow, insanity, death, devastation, darkness. Making fun of it all. Having jest with it all. Being the opposite of gravity. I cannot help myself laughing and then weeping and laughing and weeping. As they peel the clothes from me. As something sharp and terrible is removed from my shoulder numbness. As I hear more voices in the out there that was empty. As I am swabbed and moved somewhere on a stretcher. As I weep and laugh and weep some more. As it all returns not slowly but in alternatngly horrifying, joyous rushes of inrushing memories.

"God is Great, Great is God" reads the sign over the door. A metal door

with no handle, hinges, numbers or mailslot. A steel grey metal door that is cool to the touch. That opens after a push of a buzzer. God is great, great is god. OK. OK. I'm not going to argue that one.

They're going to let me stay here as long as I want. As long as I keep those hallways clean. Broom and pan. Garbage bag. Mop and pail. They're going to let me stay here for nothing until I can save enough to go where ever I'm from. That's what the man who took me from the clinic told me and that's what the nurses and the doctor told me before the man arrived. So I have to believe. It's the truth. Even the police officer who questioned me for a few minutes told the doctor to call them. That he could stay there for free if he cleaned for them. So it must be true if everyone tells me.

And this room. This small room with a cot and a chair and a desk and a light. Is mine. As long as I clean for them. Yes. I'll clean for them. I'll clean for them. I'll clean for them. Until I can remember where I'm from and where I'm supposed to go next. Where I'm going to go next. Free. But I have to go to a kitchen down the block to eat. A kitchen that is nice but full of people who were me a few yesterday. People who are me inside.

They didn't fix my teeth perfect. But good enough to think about eating more than oatmeal and bananas. And I stopped going to the soup kitchen because I no longer could eat the soup. Or stare at them who were me looking back at me hungry. Wondering who the hell I was and what I was doing there. I once even told them all that I wasn't any differant than them. That we were the same. They either didn't hear me or didn't believe me or it was too noisy for anyone to hear anything really. That, actually couldm't hear me for all the munching and talking, and screams and belching and farting and shuffling and dropping of things and one guy in the corner singing. Singing something from Oklahoma! improbably enough.

I would have to find that old couple. And thank them. And a string of apologies along the miracle of life chosen stretched out around the beautiful neck of woman world. I'm sorries in the beauty of it all that could not be spoken for they would not believe it. How would I ever go back? Was there even a back to go to so broken do I remember it being?

Laying in that bed in the tall ceilinged room with the terrazzo floor in that impossibly quiet building built in 1919. Remembering wrecked havoc in havoc central. Where had I been? How did it all start? What words had caused the unravelling? Or was it the accident? That Chrysler 300 coming out of nowhere sending me flying over the handlebars and into the window. That shattered into a million green bits as the driver swore at me, my head planted against his passenger seat headrest. The EMR guys looking in my eyes with a laser beam and then...

Nothing. My head still hurts. But I no longer hear anything but the im-

possible silense of the god is great, great is god 1919 building night. I have almost two thousand dollars in twenty dollar bills in the drawer of the night table no-one is going to steal. Not in the little town outside Ocala they sent me to. To work in this empty building on the farm where they raise impossibley expensive horses for rich children to jump over high fences. This building is empty for me so it seems. But it will fill again and then it will be time for me to go. When they return in the summer it will be time for me to go. And I will have another two thousand dollars in the drawer. And I will be able to go back. Go back. Go. Back. To 1999.

Surprisingly the more I recall the less I remember 1999. Eight years and counting. Always counting. Even after I will really be dead. Counting. Counting even after you are dust and gone too. You who walks on my ashes. Gone. And only the remote, always forefront, distant, breathing in my face questions. The journalists questions asked of myself. When I was a reporter questions I never cared to ask. When I was a failed politician I never asked myself. When I was a failed professional I never dared to. And when I was destroyed they went away. And when I am undestroyed they come back with a vengeance of a vengeance of a vengeance.

Two more weeks pass like days. I say my goodbyes. I go to see the couple. She is in hospital now. But tell me I'm looking better than she is now and that maybe they shouldn't have stopped after all. I laugh, she laughs, he laughs, we all laugh. I say my goodbyes. I cry, she cries, he cries, we all cry because we know she's going to die soon. And that he will be alone. And that I am going back to devastation. And that life is still a sting of luminescent, magical globes strung out into the ever increasing void. Beautiful, and irrepressible and all that and more. I say good bye.

One day, seven hours, fifteen minutes and a billion light years later.

Finding an apartment in Buffalo is easy. Finding a job is not. But I do. Cleaning another silent hallway deep. Only deep in the night. A large machine propelling itself Zamboni-like down all the miles down one way and then back until six hours later it is done. Every night repeated like some sort of janitorial mantra for seven dollars and fifteen cents per hour. Just enough to survive. Not enough to live. While I figure out how I can say hello when everyone I knew and loved either think I'm dead or wish I were so. Six hours a night to clean the same floor over and over and over again sight unseen to all those people who walk here in the day. To all those people who once knew me also walk. For whom I lovingly clean the floors hoping that they would walk upon them and think how clean the floor is. How this floor is so clean.

That is about as close as I can get to the ones I loved and who loved me. My children. The women I loved and still love. The friends I once knew. The Meole I joked with and did things with. Before.

The four thousand dollars had slowly become two thousand dollars when another job transpired. An ad appearing right there in the paper which I replied to immediately. Fourteen dollars and hours to clean. Only this time in a hospital. A mental hospital. A private mental hospital. A private mental hospital full of the cleanest, most sane mental hospital inmates I have ever seen.

They like me there. The people there. The patients. The nurses. The doctors who drive the best cars. The other cleaners. The cooks and waiters and porters and technologists and technicians. The visitors and emergency "guests". Mostly I liked them too, happy to be alive. Happy to breath and hear voices again not of my own making.

I had regrown the beard to cover my face, to hide behind. And the shock one day of walking towards my second wife and son and they walking by without a clue or breath of who I was was too much. I was going home. Fortunately or I would have had to call in sick so much did the well of sorrow rush in to take me down it again. For the weekend I did not leave my bed. When I started this on Friday night when I stop to sleep now. To continue in the morning after I buy some shirts for work. Groceries. A watch. And set down to write again hopefully. Again.

GRAF SAINTZ RIP

The news. It's January 1992 and the graf saintz are dead in New York City. And no one gives a shit. As if they could kill anybody with a spray can. And is if anyone really ever gave a shit about CoN and BLYD while they were alive and together as those graf saintz. Tagging everything in sight but mostly subway trains. Always at night. Always fast and fantastic. Purple. Blue. Orange. Red. Silver. Everything.

They lived for night. Day? To make money for night. For cans. For life. However they could. CoN in a deli. BLYD as bike courier. Their GRAF SAINTZ tag everywhere trains went. At least until they were dead.

No mystery how. Fucking transit cops bragged about it. How they fell to their deaths while defacing public property. It was bound to happen. It had to stop. For public safety. For the safety of all these misguided vandals. Stop it all, stop it now. Graffiti, gateway to crime in the city of New York. More bullshit. When everyone knew they killed the graf saintz. Those fucking rogue fucking murderous fucking train pigs.

CoN was from the midwest somewhere. BLYD from Queens. How they met is a lost bit of graf history, He was tagging one side, she the other. They met cutting through the middle. The rest? Part of dark graff history.

How they came up with GRAF SAINTZ a part of that. They sort of knew it was all on a timer. Who didn't. The timer being a bunch of sanctimonious city fuckers and righteous motherfucking cops. Who didn't know they came to NYC to see the trains. From all over. That the trains were NYC. And instead of hyping the art they killed it. One train at a time. Then the GRAF SAINTZ.

One body whisked off to grieving parents in somewhere Iowa under the name Anne Marie Thibodeau. Who the fuck is that? The other laying unclaimed in the morgue the requisite months, buried on Potters Island under a number plate with a registry entry in some database, in a big book in the office there in case anyone gave a shit. Someone tagged it with an undelible BLYD RIP. Guess someone did.

GRAF SAINTZ no one remembers. Not even one photo in one fat glossy coffee table twenty pounder. Celebrating the history of graffiti, my ass. 'Cause the trains are clean, stainless, steel again. Seems like killing a few artists has the effect of scaring the rest off. Leaving what? Images lost in an ever mounting picture tsunami now that everyone is a fucking photographer. Forgotten. Gone. Over. Dead.

A moment for the graf saintz around the world. But mostly fuck the world and fuck NYC. BLYD. CoN. GRAF SAINTZ. All graff saintz. Forever.

DON'T MESS WITH MISS SUNSHINE

1969 was a year to remember. Except everyone forgets that it was only 1969 for a very few, very far between. There may or may not have been Woodstock but for millions upon millions there was not. Upon millions. Definitely not.

Her name was Chloe. Chloe Anderson from somewhere in the southern states. Cheerleader. Ra-ra. School spirit. Until the summer of '67. When something came over Chloe. Something called Gustav. And Chloe, then Gustav would never be the same.

Gustav now a fond memory as mythic summer of 1969 crept carefree out of the spring chill. Blooming like blooming never happened before. That's when Chloe changed her name. Changed her name. To Miss Sunshine.

They called her Missy. Or, for them who didn't know her, Miss Sunshine. Missy favoured the mandolin. And autoharp. Her hair was long and she wore lace. Lace upon lace upon lace, so no longer sheer - no longer see through. A fabric of lace upon lace. Touring with a band called Midnite Dream, their opening act. Lover to Sky Boy and, sometimes, Pool. She liked Sky Boy but Pool had eyes that just made her swim. And everyone understood. And everyone was groovy with that.

Missy sang all her own songs, voice as clear as bluebells, happy as dandylions - she called them dandy cats in one of her favorites - Dandies on God's Green Grass. In God's green grass.

God's green grass today was on the Wild Berry Kommunity this pristine morning in late June. Wild Berry Kommunity somewhere in Appalachia, between a holler and the hills. Spritely Creek running through acres of sheep, goats, a Clydesdale name's Barney and all them huts and shacks. In the middle the ole broken down church they called The Hall - where they were to perform that night - and fields a planting. The People out early hoeing and digging and Singing. Singing. Singing. Some tune she'd never heard but made a memory of. To re-perform tonight.

Missy was sleeping in their bus, Daydreamer they called it - before the songs woke her. Daydreamer painted purple as purple can be. Sunlight haloed in the tie dyed tees cut and sewn for curtains. Sky Boy, Pool, drummer Seth, Bassist Wishman and Bingo the dog out there somewhere. She all alone for the moment. Enjoying the sensation of being all alone for the moment. Though the tug of them all was just too strong, out there, so close, so much life bursting all around her.

Outside was Mary Mary whom Missy and the boys first met in town. Who told them all to come on up, we'd love you to be with us, to play with us. So

come they did, in the night. Bouncing down the yellow lit road rough until it two pathed down dirt into the farmstead. Mary Mary jumping out ahead - for they had given her a lift back - to shout out the new arrivals.

There were hugs and shouts and everyone went to the old barn. Where there was dinner laid out, they'd been waiting for Mary Mary, see. Even better with the arrival of these new brothers and sister - Missy.

Mary Mary and Missy hugged, walking to the barn holding hands. There were lambs to care for and newly hatched chicks. Kittens. Hay they bartered from down the lane for some ol' machinery or other. A long table laid out for morning meal. Which would be when the bell rang and no later or sooner. And that would be when it were ready.

Mary Mary proposed to Missy that after morning meal they, she and her, head into the village. Not town. The village just on the other side of that ridge there, pointing over the hill rising behind some trees. Saying there was this out of sight general store, right out of the movies. Oh ya sister... oh ya!

The way there was through the woods to the back of the Kommunity. Down some deer track, across the creek. Through the meadows of the farm next who was friendly. Across a patch of woods of another who wasn't. But could only sit on their porch with a shotgun on their knee all day. Spittin and hollaring at whomever would listen. Of which there were few and far between since he was such an evil som bitch. Even eviler since stricken to an ancient wheelchair, even though his sons bought him a new 'un. Which he refused to touch: "Infernal invention!".

Then along another road most barely used since they put in the highway that they could walk right down the middle of, she and Lil' Miss.
But one truck came down that road, passing them going too fast and Mary Mary thought a bottle came out the window. But Neither heard a crash or a smash.

Down further a small wooden bridge crossed the criss crossing creek. There they sat for quite a while just enjoying the. The truck approaching slow not hardly noticed until the three boys got out. And they were boys. Maybe sixteen or seventeen. One bigger than the next.

Mary May and Lil Miss didn't think anything was amiss until one called them sweet pussies for the pickin to the other two's laughter. They were drunk too. It was a bottle because one of them passed another around. Empty, the biggest threw it into the creek, this time with an echoing shatter. Pussies for the taking? Run Mary Mary! Run... go get the men! They'd already grabbed Lil Miss... and all Mary Mary could do was listen. And run she did. Run, run, run all the way back to the Kommunity. Not seeing what

was happening. Not knowing if it were the right thing or the wrong thing to do. Just running.

A half hour later, what men there were followed Mary Mary to the road. Parting the trees there was Lil Miss. Just the same. Smiling and saying all is well. All is well. Not answering any questions except to say them boys were trouble. Trouble.

Well on a sunny day when disaster is expected but does not come there's nothing to be but happy. They all walked happy together back to the Kommunity. Everyone forgetting what happened in the telling of that other news of what was going to be a perfect morning. But wasn't. And was again.

The next morning was the day of leaving. Lil Miss and the Midnite Dreams as they were to become known - that big purple school bus, Bingo the dog ran away. Last they saw her was tailing it through the woods out back, not to be seen again. Peace, Bingo. Peace.

Mary Mary was loading in some foods for the visitors. Lil Miss carrying what she gave her. The boys fixing something underneath. Something to do with an alternator or rectifier or something. Skyboy slept. The two Bills crouched down watching. Offering a word or two. The two Bills were married. They were once Marines in the war in the jungle in the blood and murder. When they were discharged they ran off together to Canada. Then came back fuck the government, fuck the war, fuck the military. But they knew a lot. About cars and trucks and buses. About a lot.

The others

So the moral of this story? Don't mess with the Miss Flower Powers of the world. Never know.

Park Dome

The plan rolled open across a truly huge, absolutely white Triathalon Corporation conference table. Ten clean, square feet of inspired blueprint vision of the way things should be. The way things Could Be. The way things WOULD BE in the very near future. After the Triathalon public Relations gals and guys get through with things.

Tim Jackson, Vice President of Property development was the first of the assembled to break the reverent silence... "There are no other copies of this right Terry?"

"None." replied Triathalon Chief Property Development Engineer Terry O'Mally. "Not a one. I shredded all of the other drawings and drafts myself."

"Good. Nothing leaves the room... not a word." Heads nod. "Okay. On with the show."

Only Terry and Tim had prepared the project. None of his staff had been involved. This was the coup de grace they were planning for their Consumers Mall site. It had been years - no - decades in the making. Finally it was time to spring it.

"I'm certainly ready to hear more." Sonia MacGuire, Manager of the Consumer's Mall, crossed her legs in her own perky way and cocked her head into what can only be described as the very epitome of eager expectation. A smile permanently stapled across her tube tan face.

"Likewise, Sonia. Continue Tim." In a tone that said Steve Wall speaking - THE Steve Wall, newly appointed President of Triathalon Reality Corporation. Once upon a time Steve had been the manager and chief planner of the miraculous publicity rebirth of Consumers Mall. In some oddly corporate sexual way, Tim, Terry, Sonia - and everyone else in the room - had a hard-on for Steve Wall. And Steve Wall had an equally odd hard-on for all of them.

Tim continued...

"The glimmering symbol of technology and progress. A perfect half sphere, not of rough concrete but of perfect clear glass. Rising from the city like a miracle, banishing the swletering heat of summer and the freezing winds of winter. Covering not only the mall as we know it but also extending over the adjacent lands we are about to acquire or already own. Inside a full midway, waterworld, surf pool, sports-muliplex, theatre and entertainment complex, hockey rink! All, of course, market shared by the new, keystone retailers which we are working to bring into this magnificently evolved site!"

There were gasps around the table and the comments flew liberally... "Fantastic!" "Brilliant!" "This'll put Disney on it's can!" and so on. Steve Wall glowed, his face flushed in the warmth of the assembled. Then Steve was silent. For a time. The room hushed.

"What about that park? You know... the park. City. Dog walkers. Kids. Nannys. Swings, playground. The park park?"

Tim had the look of someone who had it in the bag. "I know it on good sources -" everyone chuckled... they knew who he was talking about "- that with the right deal the park... is ours."

"Develop." that was Steve talk. Steve talk for he wants to know more.

"Well, we are in possession of certain properties and rights the city wants. Needs. Has to have for certain other projects to go forward. Think subway, transit. Think roads. Think more. And if we make the exchange -"

"One for one?" Steve interjects.

"Unfortunately, not. If we make the exchange and sweeten the deal, you know, private open to public, low income, blah blah blah. And a little extra, they'll go for it. More importantly unnamed source will go for it. The rest? Easy peasy park squeezy."

Laughter around the table. Including Steve.

"Run with this Tim. Run." Steve talk - continue.

Tim went through timelines and scaling, stages and progressions. How to move slow enough to gain, not enough tension to stop anything. But fast enough for financials to work. Five years to completion. A dome stretching over the mall across the main through way and encompassing the soon to be former public park's soon to be mega-fairgrounds. Year round recreation income combined with world leading retail experience. And we'd even save a few trees (though the playground, sandbox, swings, climbing gym, all that sh*t - gotta go)!

"How can that not be globally sensational?" was Tim's last words... to a standing ovation (office drones wondering wtf was going on down in conference room one?).

Drawing rolled. Repetition of the importance of doesn't leave this room confidentiality status. Meeting breaks with smiling people going off to their c-suites, secret plan successfully laid. Hatching? Quite another matter.

The quietest person in the room is always the most dangerous... I think that was Lao Tse who said that. If not, Confucious. If not some ancient oriental someone. And the quietest person in that wannabe historic room? One Vice President of Development. Janet Brown. Up an coming until Steve

over up and comed her. Leading to this career cul de sac. Where even her developers reported directly to Steve on the most important projects - confidentiality my ass.

Janet mulled this around on the drive home. On the expressway. Across the tree lined parkway. Down her leafy haven Willowbank estates Mulbery Park Street. Into her gated driveway - gate magically opening before her and closing behind.

Talking to Jeff, her Lawyer husband. Reviewing her email before turning in. She could only grow in frustration and anger. Glass ceilings were hers to crash not be shoved into, Steve of no Steve. And the way out seemed self evident well before the evening concluded.

Janet would have to smash that dome but good. And yet never could she ever let a breath of her smashage get out. How was the only question. Steve would eat this one but good.

The next morning opened a plethora of choices in her diabolical plan. Back channels and side deals. Favours called in, dirt intimated, compromises made. The game was on.

The committee of adjustments was holding an in camera session this week. Steve, Tim and Terry would present the Triathalon Park Dome "proposal". Since the way had already been ploughed the going would be easy. No-one in the room already didn't know. Not in detail. But enough to know. Smooth sailing.

The libs, banished to their ghetto sub committees or sitting at home smoking reefers. The insiders inside. The presentation went better than well. A memorandum of understanding would be prepared. Next meeting? Two weeks hence for Janet to work her secret magic. So that the unveiling would go a little less than expected. Much little less if she could help it.

Calls went out in the evening. The next few days: discrete. Quiet coffees. A word here. A walk in the park - not *that* one though - there. At the end of her two weeks the counter plan was set, SMASH THE DOME signs, screaming activists, shit waiting to hit the fan and all.

On the day the great PARK DOME announcement was going swimmingly. There, the Mayor, Deputy Mayor, select counsellors, Steve, Tim, Terry... the press. I don't think they even got through the first drawing when the doors burst open. Or should I say dam. Dam. In five minute their plans were duly fucked, not one Janet fingerprint on the chaotic scene of the Triathalon crime.

Needless to say PARK DOME dies that day. Steve? Retired a few months later. Next President of Triathalon? I'll leave it to you to glass ceiling busted guess.

Night of the Chupacabra

Fuck if it was real! If it was real he'd make millions. He'd be the guy who captured the Chupacabra (motherfucker monsters!). MILLIONS!

So he kept on after whatever it was crashing through the bushes. Trailing a great red carpet of blood in the sand and rock and rubble. How much fucking blood did this fucking thing have?

Then - silence. And one big CRASHEROO like his Ausie friend down there somewhere at the bar woulda said. One big fucking hulking fucking crasheroo. That caused the running white man to freeze. What if it - whatever - wasn't dead? Fuck! I'd be dead That's what he thought.

So did he lose his will? Did his balls shrivel coward-like up? Or was it a dead Chupacabra come back to life!? Fuck!!

That moment there was a thunderbomb lightening flash right over the motherfucker paleface. Further scaring the living shit out of everything alive within fifty American miles (1,000 Mexican kilometers). Including our Chupacabra chasing hero. Who double turned tail and ran triple gringo fast. Ran as fast as his fucking Detroit born pale stick legs could carry him. Scrambling back, back, back to the bar now so far as fuck away.

Now was it or wasn't it? We'll never know. For that white man he ran the fuck back to the Lonesome Bar as fast as his drunk ass could carry him. No Chupacabra. Not tonight anyways. Fuck!

By the time he got there the rain was sheeting down in Hollywood torrents. The path? Guacamole. He, caked in mud from bald head to cheap Nike knock off kicks. Dragged his muck mired ass suddenly into the overhang HE looked more Chupacabra than any fucking Chupacabra. Scaring further shit out of his drunk Ausie pal and their drunk Mexicali buddies who were already jittery as fuck. Who, one and all, ran in differant directions, also into the night.

They all ran. Including their not Chupacabra pal who thought there must have been the real Chupacabra right behnd him all along. Everyone drunk. All of them sorted motherfuckers terrified. Shitified! Unable to hear his shitty pals screaming or each other or anything in the unholy ass storm.

The night of the Chupacabra.

When drunk Bob - that was his name - ran off to see what the fuck that (Chupacabra) was. And then the Chupacabra (Drunk Bob) came back scaring the unholy fuck out of all the boys.

Drunk Bob and the rest of the boys turned up the next day. Bob claiming not to remember a thing. About the night before. About the Chupacabra behind him - that was him. About nothing. No. Not even telling everyone in his shit Mexican to keep his stool warm while he goes to catches him uno milliono dollaro Chupacabra. Crazy motherfucker. But the rest? They remeber *everything*.

One more story. Joining the countless other fucked up stories in the ever growing saga of the Chupacabra. From Los Angeles to Mexico City, El Paso to Pasadena and anywhere where May the Fifth is not 05/05 and Mexican is not the same as shiftless, lazy, stupid and illegal.

And whatever happened to Bob? That not me Bob - I mean there must be a million of them out there, Bobs. This one, the drunk one. And the rest of them barguys?

Well, Ausie Adam high tailed it out of Ciudad Juarez. Disappearing hours before the narcos he was programming shit for discovered their email for the last three years had been deleted. Because Adam, stoned as always on the Chihuahua dope he loved more than pussy, had pressed the wrong button. Motherfucker. Dumb motherfucker. Soon to be DEAD motherfucker if he didn't high tail it outa there. Ausie Adam went back to Oz via Singapore plus two years in PNG.

And the Mexicalis? Some weeks later. All in one beater Ford. After turning down the wrong street. Winding up in the middle of a gun fight. Okay machine gun fight. That almost mowed them down - cut the car almost in half. Which at that point, the gang war ended. Because at it was just about to end any ways as word the local police were ready to clean up the mess.

So the gangs scattered, grabbing those who weren't dead or insignificant. Leaving the rest for the municipales and their investigations to nowhere.

And the four in the car gunning that hulk as far as it would go, a few blocks. All the dudes beating it the fuck out of town with a haste of the witness to things they shouldn't see and the understanding that nothing stays a mystery

And then Bob. Who was stopped by the policia the next day. They thought he was a journalist. Funny. And the Federales told Bob, in perfect American english, that if he wasn't gone and shut the fuck up-o before nightfall, he'd be a very dead too Gringo reporter motherfucker.

He didn't bother saying he wasn't a reporter but Bob the whatever the fuck he was. He high tailed it out of Juarez. Not even stopping in El Paso. Stopping only in the big country beyond, where he holed up in a Hotel Three. With what little money he had left from his shit English teaching job.

To figure out what the fuck to do now.

Detroit? No way. Too fucking cold and too freaking desperate. And that's all he could think, sitting at the Blueball - THE ONLY BAR FOR A HUNDRED MILES Blueball sign, fluttering, tattered, one section ripped so it intermitantly looked like THE ONLY BAR. Which, for Drunk Bob, was the basic truth right then and there.

What to do? What the fuck to do?

Sometime fate has to be chased and caught. Like that god damned forgotten night of the Chupacabra. Sometimes not. This time fate fell into Drunken Bob's lap. Well, knocked over his beer anyways.

Fuck! Beer all over Bob was about to shout SHIT! Spinning to look who the fuck did that - only to see the Biggest, Blackest Scariest Dude* Bob had ever seen so close.

“Sorry pardner, sometimes I just don't know where to put me. Let me buy you another.” The *BBSD told Bob.

Bob, scared as fuck, stammered no problem, no problem. And the man started talking to him. And Bob, his fear slowly diminishing, listened. I mean what else could he do? Run? Bob listened.

Bob listened to Ned. They called him Little Ned - little Ned didn’t like it but it stuck so he took it on. Eventually. Ned owned an authentic dude ranch out in the no man’s land. A real live fake cowboy ranch. And Ned had a problem see...

Little Ned, the biggest little black man in Texas! Owned 30,000 acres of useless desert. Sold to him by some sombitch white prick who promptly then died of a heart attack. Just as Ned was about to successsfully sue his evil white ass in civil court. So was stuck with it.

Ned’s 30,000 acres of wasteland. Where cactus and coyotes were the only cash crops - har har hardy har. Then and there Little Ned decided - against all odds and advice - to turn that salted wasteland into a dude ranch. Ten years ago. A surprise to all in a predominantly white supremacist owned county. Who had, along with considerable latinos as well, been taking bets on how long the stupid N*****’s stupid ranch would last. Bad bets it turned out.

Every year Ned’s Dude Ranch Incorporated grew more and more popular. Bringing tourists, particularly African American tourists. Dude ranchers from far and wide. And now, a steadily increasing stream of Japanese. Why last year Ned even hosted his first - holy fuck - CHINESE group! And, believe it

or not, a party from mother AFRICA. Un fucking believeable - believe it!

Not that Little Ned was rolling in Texas style money. But pretty dang close. His gold plated El Dorado low rider convertible with the Long Horns in front were a must see for tourists and locals with visitors alike. He would park it out front of the Suguaro Motel he recently restored. With it's vintage flashing cactus neon sign. And they would ALL take selfies. In and on his magnificent automobile. In front of his picture perfectly restored 1950's motel... where he wouldn't have been able to clean the toilets let alone stay in, in the day.

No, Little Ned wasn't the richest man in the 254 counties of the great state of Texas. But he might have been the richest black man. Which was pretty fucking great. And even the locals toned down their n word usage after year something. Little Ned was becoming an institution. A Texas legend.

But that night Little Ned knocked over Drunk Bob's beer? Little Ned had a problem. He neeeded a WHITE cowboy pronto. For his old white cowboy quit or run off or who knows what the fuck some days ago. They said he skipped town owing money. Who gives a shit! Simple: Japanese tourists arriving the next morning needed a white cowboy. God damn all those westerns but there it was plain as day.

Little Ned, looking at the unshaven, sorry sight of Bob at THE ONLY BAR Blueball. If he squinted. Little Ned could see the makings of a cowboy. Not a real cowboy, mind you. But one good enough for the Nippon folk about to descend tomorrow on his very own about to be Pearl Harbour averted!

On the spot he offered Bob a job. It took a while for Little Ned to explain it to stupid drunk motherfucker Bob. Who took no time in accepting. I mean what white male wouldn't take a job where all he has to do is basically nothing. But show up. Put on the cowboy clothes they gave him. And talk like John Wayne.

Bob figured he could do that. Easy. Swagger about pretending he was the bossman like Ned said to him. While all the work got done by Little Ned's always reliable crew of real Latino friends and trusted, real black cowboys. Fuck, bonus: Bob didn't even have to shave or brush his teeth!

The work was beyond ridiculous. But also vital to Ned. And on Sundays - the only day he didn't "work" - the day when the tours departed Bob spied the opportunity to be getting as drunk as he fucking wanted. Sleep in all day. And the same on Monday, his other day off. Sleep all fucking day if he wanted to.

A few weeks later... Going well for now Cowboy Bob. Ned happier than f. A whole new bunch of dudes staying at Neds Dude Ranch for a true west

week. Day one: basic riding lessons and a three hour first tour.

Tony, from Bangor Maine and the horse he got, Pacifico second to Hector lead, was a pony really. One of the sweetest, gentlest mares in the stable. Guaranteed not to buck or best the tourists ass no matter what. Which was why Tony, the most frightened of this lot, was assigned to Pacifico.

Pacifico knew the trail better than them all. Followed the routine as if led. Could follow the path in the dark. Needed a little chuck chuck to get gentle going and then... well just went along.

Tony was fucking proud to be on a horse in Texas on the trail at a million acre ranch. Never mind the rest. Nor did it matter that the longhorns here were mostly for show, scattered grazing in the brush to charm the tourists. Their huge ass horns and massive rug carcasses appearing seemingly at random in their week or two week long excursions.

Dead Man's Canyon. Tonto Aroya. Playa del Morte... those names of stark and unusual places would haunt their imaginations maybe for generations to come. Even if they couldn't pronounce them.

The posse would stop to search for indian arrowheads among the rocks of a dry stream. Build a campfire in the sand pits magically appearing between two mountainous outcroppings. As the sun set. Enjoying beans and bacon, steak and corn bread just like the days of yore.

Cowboy Tony from Bangor Maine.

Desert Sue from Ohio.

Gulch Gus as German as Goring.

Butte Bud hailing from Memphis, TN.

Cactus Kate from who the fuck knows where but she.

On and on and on.

All joining the countless other fucked up stories in the ever growing saga of the United States of Chupacabra stories around the Ned’s Dude Ranch and thousand other campfires. Fuelling even more Chupacabra stories. Ned’s finishing the night with that Bob’s now famous Night of The Chupacabra story. Bob the cowboy as fake as his tale, taller than Texas and Ned are (both) big. Big. BIG

On Spontaneous Human Combustion

Riding the subway at midnight is unpleasant experience. On a Tuesday night more so. Going home from work, late, double that. After troubling shift – never mind. Better than freezing to death. Just.

On the car the same scattering of humanity. Lucinda and Raul Gomes, Sao Paolo, Brazil. Arthur “Sam” Samsundurbinian, Sri Lankan religious studies student. On his way to becoming a Pastor. Anglican I think. Yes, Anglican. The family that spoke no English. Hungarian Roma, fresh off the plane clueless. They were here. God damned happy to be here.

Seven. Eight if I include myself. Nine, a Jamaican who said his name was TIME. All caps. TIME looked through me. TIME looked through everybody. TIME disappeared first. They say frozen in a bus shelter a few days later. Next, Lucy Foster Jones, formerly of Liberia. A refugee whose files... sealed. Discovered “No vital signs” by her room mate shortly after TIME went to space. That's ten total.

The Roma, deported weeks later. Unable to locate them in Hungary. Where I was told they were “illegal” anyways before the officious bastard on the phone – with his camp Cza Cza Gabor – accent hung up on me. Fascist.

Sam died, hit by a cop car on Spadina while crossing on a red light. Officer Stamps, Ontario Provincial Police, no standard Internal Affairs Investigation. The guy was crossing on a red. Stamps re-assigned to Sault Saint Marie before resigning to join CSIS.

Lucinda and Raul? Also deported. Three months later Raul murdered in a favela gang verses military police Uzi battle. Lucinda, disappeared. Rumoured also murdered for asking too many questions. By police or gang. Or both.

Which leaves me. Why am I alive? Probably because there's some law or regulation or rule about not killing actual citizens. Though I believe Sam was about to become one. His date in front of Citizenship judge just days after his demise. Not dead. Just me.

She boarded the train at Ossington station. Sitting directly across from me. She was pretty. Brown skin, black hair, curly. Eyes averted. Mostly playing with her phone. One, two, three. At St George Station, as the doors chimes closed – bing, bang, bong – she fell to the floor. Suddenly. Face very much down.

Smoke started pouring from face – I presume her mouth and nose under all that curly hair – almost instantly. Then streaming from her ears and under her clothing. The flames erupted as if from the outside blazing inwards. By

the time the car came to a rolling stop the doors opening to no one at Bay station she was gone. Diminished to a comical outline of ashes. What happens when a laser gun blasts someone, Buck Roger's twenty ninth century style.

Everyone transfixed. Stunned. The children burst into equally combustible tears, wailing as if the end of the world were here. Momma too. The train, curiously did not move. And the conductors or operators or drivers or engineers or whatever the fuck they are called – both of them – came running almost as instantly.

We were all there – sitting, standing, frozen, wailing, TIME raving about the righteous forces finally rising up to dim the florescents, justice and Jai. By the time the police arrived forty minutes later the station had already been evacuated and shut down by TTC transit cops. Who appeared, also out of nowhere. Twelve or fifteen of them. Moving everybody the hell out except us witnesses. Where we talked. We talked.

Once some suited I though police arrived we were led to some grey doors. Doors down. Down to secret station below. There in a subway car seemingly sitting there waiting for us more suits. Though I suspect it's where they were sitting before all this shit went down. There was a warm coffee on one of the seats.

But all this not before I got everyone's contact information. Quickly. Telling them I was a reporter. Which I was. Ten years ago. So I wasn't lying exactly. And I did intend to write the story on this one.

I did not go through the ash's handbag to see who she was. I do not know. She isn't even among the dozens reported missing I could find pictures to match. For I recall very clearly what she looked like. Before she burst into flames. During. After. She is a mystery. Like why I am not dead.

I know why I'm not dead. First that pesky probable regulation - no kill citizens policy. Possibly.

Second, I am a hopeless writer of FICTION. And worse, poetry. So who the fuck would believe anything I wrote any ways. Lastly, even I don't believe what I saw was real. Though it was. I see it now like it is just happening, on that subway car. Girl. Fire, smoke, ashes, gone. I don't believe it myself.

I've done the homework. It's all fog and unattributed. No physical evidence or identified or findable witnesses. More bullshit from the misty hinterland of human imagination. It happened in front of me. On a subway car in February 2016. While coming home from another disturbing day's work.

I would say it was a product of my imagination. But that I kept a hand full of ashes which sit in an envelope here. Those ashes. Those damned ashes. Also proof of nothing.

While it happened I didn't even have the composure to get out my cellphone and take a video of the horror. Of some woman burning to dust right there in the subway. Hours later I remember – kicking myself.

There have been no revisitations. No follow up. No nothing. Released after the police - or whatever they were - took our separate statements.

One by one led off to another room under there. A few questions, a thank you and a polite escort out some emergency exit. Landing on cold Bay street a few blocks away from the scene of the burning up.

It was really weird for a time. Weeks later I was afraid everyone and anyone would spontaneously combust. On the subway. Then on the streetcar. Bus. Street. Work. That the fellow with the greasy trench would be a pile of ashes thirty seconds later. Even that I would burn up while shaving or in the shower. From what I saw even a shower wouldn't have stopped her from doing the ashes thing. It was intense.

The look on her face when it started was inexplicable. A combo if fear, surprise, laughter and horror. Like she was going to laugh but it was just too terrible. A surprise birthday party – only cremation. Becoming a flame. Holy shit! Can you believe – then poof! Flash! Done! With me the only surviving witness. Me.

I have never seen a UFO. Nor big foot. I do not believe in angels, devils and/or demons. Other dimensions? Maybe. Never been there if you can describe some other dimension as a there. I doubt it. Then again what do I know? Witches, ghosts and the like? Not really. And Evil with a capital E? All around us... fucking bad people. Doing really bad fucking things.

So I'm not one for stories. Though I write plenty. Which is why you will never believe anything I say. Even if I told you some chick on the subway burst into electric flames and turned into ashes in under thirty seconds.

And gently flows the Don Valley Expressway

The start of The Great Canadian Novel. Add allusions to a great literary past That Never Was. Diminished in the global, tidal roar of metal hurtling on asphalt, chaotic, blended, obscure mechanical noise, mixed with poison smoke, carcinogenic dust, horrific knowledge. Mobs rushing in cars with coffee to get there, to get back, to get anywhere. *FAST*. Airplanes taking off sending humans here, there, nowhere. Contrails high over head, twist, turn, slowly vanish. Landing airplanes howling too low overhead. Screaming. Shrieking.

There is no end, no cessation - only pause. Bloody tangled steel - paused. Constant between random acts of periodic and unpredictable mayhem. Pausation. Then silence, uncomfortable, unnatural, terrible, really terrifying, silence reigns. If only for milliseconds. Even then with more as a brown noise, white noise, background black noise.

Until the quiet gets the fuck out of the way, emergency sirens rushing in to resume the motion blast of the ASAP world. As soon as possible everything, everywhere. Get it running. Hose it down. Lift it up. Build it, demolish it, sell it, buy it. Now. Righjt now. Right fucking now! As soon as possible. Thus thegreat Canadian novel. Starts.

The year is some time early in roughly the second millennium of continuous white and unselfconsciously caucasian so-called recorded history. Time love American style. A mere gathering of bogus significant moments since this place was an unbroken, lost, fucked and wonderfully wandering wilderness of verdant green. No sounds save those of the greater ceaseless, and eternal un-recordable true history. No noise. No more noticed now than the stars lost in orange halogenic haze. No more and never no more. No.

Lost. Lost and forever again lost. Lost in all of this greatness, this Civilization, these times of great History. And these are HISTORIC times. Never forget. THESE ARE HISTORIC TIMES. And nothing before not US and not our barbaric exploits - mislabeled civilization - really existed

The friendly dog saving innocent lives with a warm nuzzle and a wagging tail. For the news, for law and order and society far better. An out of control pit bull death locking onto the jugular of the gun glutted murderously inspired madman negro. Thus discouraging future former thugs from considerations of anonymous park mayhem and gun play in their desperation. Day tripping delusionals slash druggies moving from bus shelter to sidewalk to alley to catch sleep the night robbed them of. All. All a far better place for us all. Far better than the nothing before this civilization.

Then the lights go out all over everywhere.

First thought was that it was a fucking fuse in the fucking electrical box. Then the then unknown grow-houses dropping the building's bazooka sized shell fuses plunging the roach infested "migrant" occupied edge of hell into a greater black. Then off to work realizing if was more like everywhere in this not so long ago wilderness.

Power out. Everywhere. Everywhere up and down the seaboard clearly visible if we were up there as a now darkened swath, if only from a space we will never experience. The family I no longer live with describing their adventures getting home in the newly primitive world around us.

Mercifully. Twenty four merciful hour granted us by Jesus, Jesus Christ, Mary, Mother Mary, Joseph and Mohamed and Mohamed Ali. Krishna. Hare Knrishna. Reverend Sung Yung Moon, Moses, Mahatma G, Mandela, Dali Lama, John, Yoko, Courtney and Kurt, Jim Jones, Charley Manson, God and the Devil and Buddha fat Chinese restaurant Buddha, the wagging hello cat, lucky frog and all, all give us these given and blessed darkness hours.

Thank you. Thank you one and all. Thank you universe for turning off the juice so we could for a moment see where we were, who we were. Without the damned lights to keep us up at night, the blaring noise to keep us from thinking, the everything to prevent us from ever again seeing everything ever again. Thank you. Thank you all of you.

The punch plume of smoke and flames depicted on the TV boxes all over civilization. To horror here and cheers there, to disbelief and deeper injury to the sense that it's all okay, all right and okay. That the buildings will be there tomorrow and won't fall from the sky in incendiary, crematory sixteen story piled rubble. Where not even the rats or roaches survived. Not even the billion years Survivors survived to be televised extracting themselves from the wreckage. Not even the ants, trillion year marathon athletes survived for network TV to show emerging, signs of hope that life could come from this mess we have made of the world.

But they sure ran like rats from the corridors, complexes and towers of power. Outside headquarters and legislatures and hubs of affluence worldwide - well the world that counts anyways - nondescript minivans idled with one or two suited burly boys nervously standing about. No phalanxes of security here in the flying under the radar zone of low budget insecurity. Just side exits, service elevators, parking garages, lock-less doors. Quiet escapes to far away lake sides while the storm does or does not consume the world left far behind. And even the not so rich upper mids left us all here to rot in the shadow of whatever was coming, jamming the highways out with their survivalist packed vehicles.

Within minutes of the events the movers and the shakers, big shots and grandees, heroes and heroines of commerce, arts and science and their wannabees had vanished. Vanished leaving us behind to enjoy the events of the end of days. Behind in the darkness of the last blackout. The jetless skies, eerie sense of disaster pending everywhere, the endless repeating of Doom, scenes of the apocalypse finally raining down. The disaster movie effects come insanely alive numbers of dead or disastrously affected escalating like the stress meters in all of our left behind heads. Consequences going off the charts. Going out of our minds whilst they sip cold drinks on the shores of Lake Mafremegog, Cold Lake, lake what the fuck as long as it's far, far away from all this, all that....

Burlington man throws child onto expressway where she is gravely injured and then follows, jumping to his death.

Lunatic drives rental van with jerry cans of gasoline inside onto legislature grounds. Sets self on fire. Selfless firefighters intervene risking their own lives for someone who wished to die and would have killed them as well without pause.

Woman jumps from balcony during drug raid of squatter crack house apartment. Dies on the frozen gravel roof of a hellish garage

A mother is going home with her child tagging along on the sidewalk behind her in front of the Mental Hospital. Mom turns to see a huge woman in a mu-mu enveloping her daughter in great billous fat arms. Walking away muttering something. Mother feels the fleeting terror of being helpless - of it being entirely her fault for not holding her daughters hand, not keeping child close in unseen danger.

There are many things to do. The adrenal mind presents a list in a millisecond. Run screaming into the path of the streetcar because the child I created is already dead. Stand there because this is really not happening and cannot really be happening. It's a nightmare and I will wake up. Run and kill the fat monster in a way that loosens her grip so my child falls gently into a loving embrace. Go somewhere far away never having had children for this moment and others like this moment in the past. Approach the person holding my child calmly, thinking furiously, looking for the crazy logic to press which will cause the wall of woman to simply give back the child in response. Find the magic code words to present that will release the child. Which she did and said and happened and cannot remember exactly what it was running across the street and home in tears. The mother distressed beyond belief - but not the child who simply wondered what the fuss was all about.

All the stories that flood the world out there. So far from the sighing pines and lapping waters. And quiet flows the Don Valley Expressway.

ABOUT ?

This book is highly imperfect. Incomplete. For the record.

Just who the fuck do I think I am? Or _how to answer anyone who asks “Who the fuck do you think you are!?” And the correct answer is one of “Who really gives a shit?”, “You’re asking me?” or ”Fuck off!”. Yes, blah blah blah is great for English Lit world. But it’s pure waste of time bullshit in the land of right here and right now.

The rest of the stuff - where I was born, raised, what happened, where I am, etc. All that autobiography shit? All that actual **ABOUT** stuff will have to wait. Either if it becomes the realm of biographers (those very agile inventors of even more BS). Or, maybe, if I have a few years to waste, to do the same. More better fantastic self invention! Either way... B dot S.

Note: I’ve been writing pretty seriously since I was 13 years old. When I first got it into my head to be a writer. Because I loved to read. Or, perhaps more precisely, when words became a strong world I inhabited. Books, reading, dreams of writing. So write I did. Write I have.

And writer? Am I a writer? Maybe. I have sorta published. On the blessed internet. But we all know that doesn’t count. At least if we’re in stuck in that very fucked up 20th century mindset. And in that twisted world view I’ve never written anything. No matter how many hundreds of articles, poems, stories, screes, rants, polemics I’ve strewn into network of networks. But no paper tree killer print real writer publishing equals a big fat nope, not, never was, not is.

I’m “self-published”. Self publishing. Which is like saying I’m the poor whore beat bastard retard psycho dirt child of the real official, publishing, published, book tour, podcast hack interview author thing world. The “I’m a real author and you’re self-published and not, so fuck off!” author thing. No. Not in that club.

Well fuck them. Fuck them all.

In this book. In the books of poetry previously issued. In the next one. I’m going to put out as much of what I’ve written over the last fifty plus years as I can. Out there. Finally. At long fucking last.

Then, if and when that’s done, and only if and when that’s done, I’m going to unleash more. If there’s anything left. And that’s about as but **ABOUT** as you’re going to get in this year we call 2024. On the particular time marking scheme point we refer to as the twenty second day of November. Which is indicated as a Friday. At least on all the history recording foolishness that persists today. Which time scheme is unlikely to survive much longer. But will do for now, as a marker, you can identify with, at least until something better comes along.

Peace, love, truth to power ⊕ Bob Allisat Toronto